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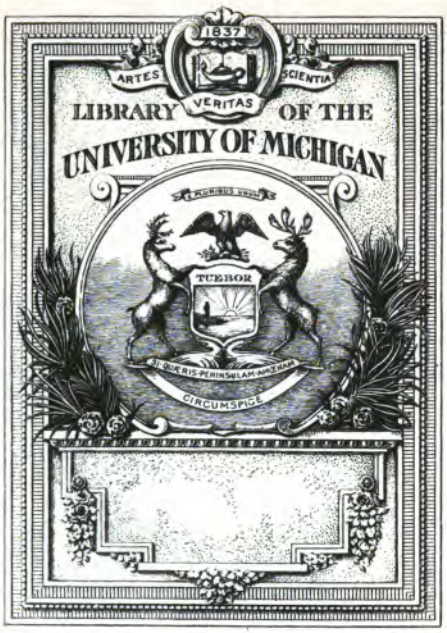

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BOETHIUS's

CONSOLATION

365

OF

PHILOSOPHY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN,

WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

By the Rev. Mr. PHILIP RIDPATH,

MINISTER OF HUTTON, BERWICKSHIRE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY.

M.DCC.LXXXV.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY DUNDAS,

TREASURER OF THE NAVY,

KEEPER OF THE SIGNET,

DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF ADVOCATES IN SCOTLAND,

AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

SIR,

IN every age, Philoſophy and the Muſes have been the delight of great and eminent men. They have ſerved to ſoothe the anxieties naturally attendant on high ſtation, and to relieve the ſpirits during the intervals of buſineſs. This encourages me to a preſent

preſent to your patronage Boethius's eloquent Treatiſe of The Conſolation of Philosophy; a Work which has been tranſlated into moſt of the languages of Europe, and into the Saxon and our own by two of our moſt illuſtrious Princes, Alfred and Elizabeth. There is ſomething congenial in great and noble minds, and what appeared intereſting to them, cannot be indifferent to you. Length of time, and the mutability of language, have deprived us of the fruits of their leiſure. The preſent verſion of this beautiful and philoſophical Dialogue has coſt me much pains and labour; and, indeed, I ſhould never have preſumed, under your protection and patronage, to offer it to the Publick, had I not endeavoured to make it as perfect as I poſſibly could.

Conſcious

DEDICATION.

Conſcious of the nature of your talents, you early quitted the humble purſuits of literature, to diſplay the extent of your powers on the great theatre of buſineſs and affairs; and envy muſt allow, you have diſtinguiſhed yourſelf in ſo conſpicuous a manner in our national concerns, and ſupported your manly and generous principles of liberty and government with ſuch force of argument and genuine eloquence, as has rendered you the boaſt and glory of our country. It is therefore with peculiar ſatisfaction that I embrace the opportunity afforded me of uniting in the general voice, and expreſſing my eſteem and admiration of your great talents, which you employ with ſo much zeal, advantage, and ſucceſs in the publick cauſe. Your generous exertions to ſerve our country cannot entirely engroſs ſo active

and capacious a mind; and though higher views may have interrupted the ſtudies of your early years, yet you ſtill look with a lover's eye on Letters and the Muſes.

That you may long continue to unite the favour of your Sovereign with the confidence of every real patriot, is the ſincere wiſh of,

SIR,

With the greateſt eſteem and reſpect,

Your moſt obedient,

and moſt humble Servant,

PHILIP RIDPATH.

LONDON, *June*, 1785.

THE

THE LIFE OF BOETHIUS.

ANICIUS Manlius Severinus Boethius was deſcended from an ancient and noble family *. Many of his anceſtors were ſenators and conſuls of Rome. He was born at Rome, in the 455th year of the Chriſtian era, 46 years after the taking of that city by Alarick I. king of the Goths. Boethius Severinus, his father, was Prefect of the palace to Valentinian III; and, by the command

* Some of the writers of his life derive his pedigree from the celebrated Manlius Torquatus.

of that emperor, was put to death in the ſame year which gave birth to his illuſtrious ſon. Though deprived of the care of an excellent parent, the young Boethius had the happineſs of falling under the tuition of worthy relations, who gave him a good education, and inſpired him with an early taſte for Philoſophy, and the Belles Lettres. They ſent him to Athens, where theſe ſtudies ſtill flouriſhed. He reſided eighteen years in that celebrated ſeminary, where, animated by a noble emulation, he diſtinguiſhed himſelf among his fellow-ſtudents, and made a ſurprizing progreſs in every branch of literature. But Philoſophy and Mathematicks were his darling ſtudies; Plato, Ariſtotle, Euclid, and Ptolomy, his favourite authors. He ſtudied their writings with the utmoſt attention, and became maſter of all the treaſures of ſcience contained in them.

In

In this manner did Boethius employ his youth. His progreſs in virtue, in the mean time, kept pace with his advancement in knowledge: for he was no leſs remarkable for probity and humanity, than for his fine genius and extenſive erudition. Upon his return to Rome, he ſoon attracted the publick attention. He was conſidered as a perſon born to promote the happineſs of ſociety. The moſt diſtinguiſhed men in the city ſought his friendſhip, perceiving that his merit would ſoon advance him to the firſt employments of the ſtate. His alliance was wiſhed for by perſons the moſt reſpectable. But Elpis, deſcended from one of the moſt conſiderable families of Meſſina, was the lady on whom Boethius fixed his choice. His choice was fortunate; for in Elpis there was united all the accompliſhments of the head and heart. She had a fine taſte in literature, par-

ticularly in poetry *, and was a ſhining example of every virtue; ſo that ſhe muſt have been a delightful companion to this eminent philoſopher and ſtateſman. She bore him two ſons, Patritius and Hypatius.

To the happineſs of poſſeſſing a lady of ſuch uncommon merit, Boethius ſoon had the ſatisfaction of obtaining the higheſt honour his country could beſtow. He was made Conſul in the year 487, at the age of 32. Odoacer, king of the Heruli, reigned at that time in Italy, who, after
A. D. 480. having put to death Oreſtes, and depoſed his ſon Auguſtulus, the laſt emperor of the Weſt, aſſumed the title of king of that country. Two years after Boethius's advancement to the dignity of Conſul, Theo-

* There are two hymns, which are ſtill ſung in the publick worſhip, that are ſaid to be of her compoſition. They begin, *Aurea lux*, and *Felix per omnes*.

dorick,

dorick, king of the Goths, invaded Italy; and, having conquered Odoacer and put him to death, he in a ſhort time made himſelf maſter of that country, and fixed the ſeat of his government at Ravenna, as Odoacer and ſeveral of the later weſtern emperors had done before him. The Romans and the inhabitants of Italy were pleaſed with the government of Theodorick, becauſe he wiſely ruled them by the ſame laws, the ſame polity, and the ſame magiſtrates they were accuſtomed to, under the emperors. In the eighth year of this Prince's reign, Boethius had the ſingular felicity of beholding his two ſons, Patritius and Hypatius, raiſed to the conſular dignity. During their continuance in office, Theodorick came to Rome, where he had been long expected, and was received by the ſenate and people with the greateſt demonſtrations of joy. Boethius made him an eloquent panegyrick A. D. 500.

panegyrick in the ſenate; which the king anſwered in the moſt obliging terms, declaring that he ſhould ever have the greateſt reſpect for that auguſt aſſembly, and would never encroach upon any of their privileges. From the Senate-houſe Theodorick repaired to the Circus, attended by Boethius, his conſul-ſons, and the whole body of the ſenate, where he made a very ingratiating ſpeech to the people, and where both he and Boethius diſpenſed to them largeſſes equal to their moſt enlarged expectations. This remarkable day concluded with a ſplendid feaſt, which the king gave to the ſenators. St. Fulgentius, biſhop of Ruſpina, in Africa, who had fled to Rome from the cruelty of Thraſimond, king of the Vandals in that country, was ſo much ſtruck with the pomp and magnificence exhibited on this occaſion, that he exclaimed, If terreſtrial Rome is ſo dazzling, what muſt the celeſ-

tial Jeruſalem be, which God hath promiſed to his elect!

Boethius was advanced a ſecond time to the dignity of Conſul, in the eighteenth year of the reign of king Theodorick. A. D. 510. Power and honour could not have been conferred upon a perſon more worthy of them: for he was both an excellent magiſtrate and ſtateſman, as he faithfully and aſſiduouſly executed the duties of his office; and employed, upon every occaſion, the great influence he had at court, in protecting the innocent, relieving the needy, and in procuring the redreſs of ſuch grievances as gave juſt cauſe of complaint. The care of publick affairs did not however engroſs his whole attention. This year, as he informs us himſelf *, he wrote his Commentary upon the Predicaments, or the Ten Categories of Ariſtotle. In

* This he tells us in the beginning of the ſecond Book of this Commentary.

imitation

imitation of Cato, Cicero, and Brutus; he devoted the whole of his time to the ſervice of the commonwealth, and to the cultivation of the ſciences. He publiſhed a variety of writings, in which he treated upon almoſt every branch of literature. I ſhall mention the principal of them. Beſides the Commentary upon Ariſtotle's Categories, noticed above, Boethius wrote an Explanation of that Philoſopher's topicks, in eight Books; another, of his Sophiſms, in two Books; and Commentaries upon many other parts of his writings. He tranſlated the whole of Plato's works: He wrote a Commentary, in ſix Books, upon Cicero's topicks: He commented alſo upon Porphyry's writings: He publiſhed a Diſcourſe on Rhetorick in one Book; a Treatiſe on Arithmetick in two Books *; and another, in five Books,

* Caſſiodorus relates, that Boethius tranſlated Nicomachus's celebrated Treatiſe upon Arithmetick. It is now loſt.

upon

upon Muſick †: He wrote three Books upon Geometry, the laſt of which is loſt: He tranſlated Euclid; and wrote a Treatiſe upon the Quadrature of the Circle; neither of which performances are now remaining: He publiſhed alſo tranſlations of Ptolomy of Alexandria's works; and of the writings of the celebrated Archimedes ‡: and, to conclude this imperfect liſt of his learned labours, he publiſhed ſeveral Treatiſes upon Theological and Metaphyſical ſubjects, which are ſtill preſerved.

The acuteneſs of underſtanding and profound erudition diſplayed in ſuch a diverſity of works, upon all ſubjects, acquired Boethius a great reputation, not

† Beſides the Treatiſe which he himſelf compoſed upon Muſick, he tranſlated Pythagoras's Treatiſe upon that fine art: which is unhappily loſt.

‡ The Romans at this time were almoſt entirely unacquainted with the Grecian literature. Boethius, by his tranſlations and learned commentaries, revived the knowledge of it amongſt them.

only

only among his countrymen, but with foreigners. Gondebald king of the Burgundians, who had married a daughter of Theodorick, came to Ravenna, on a viſit to his father-in-law, and thence went to Rome; not only with a view to ſee the beauties of that famous city, but that he might have the pleaſure of converſing with our illuſtrious Philoſopher, Boethius, ſenſible of the great honour conferred upon him by this Prince, did every thing in his power to amuſe and entertain him. He ſhowed him ſeveral curious mechanical works of his own invention, which Gondebald greatly admired; but what chiefly ſtruck him, were two watches or time-keepers; one of which pointed out the ſun's diurnal and annual motion in the ecliptick, upon a moveable ſphere; and the other indicated the hours of the day *, by

* This contrivance was called a Clepſydra. It was invented in Greece, and was in uſe both among the

by the expedient of water dropping out of one veſſel into another. So fond was Gondebald of theſe pieces of mechaniſm, that upon his return to his own country, he diſpatched ambaſſadors to Theodorick, praying that he would procure for him the two wonderful time-keepers he had ſeen at Rome. Upon this occaſion, Theodorick wrote to Boethius; and his letter, which is very honourable for our author, is preſerved by Caſſiodorus. I ſhall give ſome extracts from it. "The lord of the "Burgundians," he informs him, "urges "us with much importunity, by his am-

the Greeks and Romans. The water dropped from a ſmall hole in the upper veſſel, and fell into the lower. The riſing of the water in the lower veſſel, pointed out the hours, probably by a ſcale of hours and parts of an hour fixed to the ſide of it. It is likely Boethius made ſome improvement upon this invention, by which he rendered it more accurate and uſeful.

" baſſadors, that we would be pleaſed to " ſend him the two wonderful time-keep- " ers which you ſhowed him at Rome, " and to ſend along with them the perſons " who by your direction conſtructed them. " Such contrivances, tho' common with " us," he adds, " appear almoſt miracu- " lous to them; and hence ariſes their " earneſt deſire of having ſome of them " in their poſſeſſion." He tells him afterwards, that the Senators of Rome were indebted to him for the whole of their knowledge in the learning of the Greeks: " for in your admirable tranſlations," ſays he, " all Italy now reads with plea- " ſure, Pythagoras the muſician, Ptolomy " the aſtronomer, and Nicomachus the " arithmetician. By means of *theſe*, the " rich treaſures contained in the geometry " of Euclid, the theology of Plato, and " the logick of Ariſtotle, are laid open to " us all. You have reſtored the celebrated

" Archimedes to Sicily, his country. In " ſhort, you have imported into Italy " all the ſciences and all the arts pro- " duced in the fertile ſoil of Greece, and " have made them your own: for all " your tranſlations are executed with ſuch " perſpicuity and elegance, that I am " perſuaded a maſter in both languages " would prefer them to the originals." In the concluſion of his letter, Theodorick deſires Boethius to ſend him the above-mentioned time-keepers, to be tranſmitted to Gondobald, that the fame of his ingenuity might be made known to a country where he could not go in perſon. " Teach foreign nations," adds he, " that we have nobles who are " not inferior in genius to the celebrated " authors whoſe fame is ſpread every " where. When ſuch curious inventions " were mentioned to theſe diſtant people, " they looked upon them as mere dreams

" and chimeras. But they will be con-
" vinced of their error, when they ſee
" theſe wonders realized; and they will
" not dare equal themſelves to us, when
" they know that we have amongſt us phi-
" loſophers, capable of inventing and exe-
" cuting ſuch ingenious performances."

By this letter it appears in what high eſteem Boethius was held by Theodorick, who was a prince of great capacity, and governed hitherto with much prudence, equity, and moderation. But theſe eminent virtues he afterwards ſullied by flagrant acts of cruelty and injuſtice.—During the courſe of theſe tranſactions, Boethius loſt his beloved wife Elpis, the faithful partner of his domeſtick cares, his pleaſures, and his ſtudies*. To comfort

* She was buried in Rome, in the Portico of St. Peter, where her epitaph ſtill remains. I ſhall ſubjoin a part of it:

Elpis

fort himſelf under this affliction (for the wiſe man comforts himſelf under every event) he married a ſecond time; and had the uncommon felicity of being again equally happy in his choice. The lady whom he choſe for his conſort was Ruſticiana, the daughter of Symmachus, one of the moſt reſpectable men in Rome for birth, learning, and probity. This lady bore him two ſons, Symmachus and Boethius; who, as we are informed in the ſecond book of the Conſolation, were conſpicuous in their youth for very eminent talents.

Boethius was a third time elected Conſul, along with Symmachus, his father- A. D. 522.

Elpis dicta fui, Siculæ regionis alumna,
Quam procul a patria conjugis egit amor;
Quo ſine mœſta dies, nox anxia, flebilis hora.
* * * * * * * * * * *
Porticibus ſacris jam nunc peregrina quieſco,
Judicis Æterni teſtificata thronum.

in-law, in the 30th year of Theodorick's reign. Neither ambition nor intereſt prompted him, in the decline of life, to undertake that high office: he had no other view but to promote the good of the State, and to protect thoſe worthy citizens whoſe ſuffrages had advanced him to that dignity. This was his laſt Conſulſhip: during the courſe of it he had the misfortune to fall under the diſpleaſure of king Theodorick.—Boethius had been hitherto remarkably fortunate: he had lived long in health, affluence, and ſplendor; had attained to every honour he could expect; and had preſerved invariably the eſteem and affection of his fellow-citizens. During the courſe of almoſt forty years, for capacity and probity, he was undoubtedly the moſt diſtinguiſhed character in Rome. His uncommon merit, however, and his great influence, did not prevent his ruin; they were probably

bably the cauſes of it.—King Theodorick was an Arian; and Boethius, who was a Catholick, unluckily publiſhed about this time a Book upon the Unity of the Trinity, in oppoſition to the three famous ſects of Arians, Neſtorians, and Eutychians. This treatiſe was univerſally read, and created our author a great many enemies at court; who inſinuated to the prince, that Boethius wanted not only to deſtroy Arianiſm, but to effectuate a change of government, and deliver Italy from the dominion of the Goths; and that, from his great credit and influence, he was the moſt likely perſon to bring about ſuch a revolution.—Whilſt his enemies were thus buſied at Ravenna, they employed emiſſaries to ſow the ſeeds of diſcontent at Rome, and to excite factious people openly to oppoſe him in the exerciſe of his office as Conſul.—Boethius, in

the mean while, wanting no other reward than a ſenſe of his integrity, laboured both by his eloquence and his authority to defeat their wicked attempts; and perſiſted reſolutely in his endeavours to promote the publick welfare, by ſupporting the oppreſſed, and bringing offenders to juſtice. But his integrity and ſteadineſs tended only to haſten his fall. King Theodorick, corrupted probably by a long ſeries of good fortune, began now to take off the maſk. This prince, tho' an Arian, had hitherto preſerved ſentiments of moderation and equity with regard to the Catholicks: but fearing, perhaps, that they had a view of overturning his government, he began now to treat them with ſeverity.

Boethius was one of the firſt that fell a victim to his rigour. He had continued long in favour with his prince, and was more

more beloved by him than any other perſon: but neither the remembrance of former affection, nor the abſolute certainty the king had of his innocence, prevented him from proſecuting our Philoſopher, upon the evidence of three abandoned profligates, infamous for all manner of crimes. The offences laid to his charge, as we are informed in the firſt book of the Conſolation of Philoſophy, were, "That he wiſhed to preſerve the "Senate and its authority: that he hin-"dered an informer from producing "proofs, which would have convicted "that aſſembly of treaſon: and that he "formed a ſcheme for the reſtoration of "the Roman liberty." In proof of the laſt article, the above-mentioned profligates produced letters forged by themſelves, which they falſely averred were written by Boethius. For theſe ſuppoſed

crimes, as we learn from the ſame authority, he was, unheard and undefended, at the diſtance of five hundred miles, proſcribed and condemned to death.—Theodorick, conſcious that his ſeverity would be univerſally blamed, did not at this time carry his ſentence fully into execution; but contented himſelf with confiſcating Boethius's effects, with baniſhing him to Pavia, and confining him to priſon.

A. D. 523.

Soon after this, Juſtin, the Catholick Emperor of the Eaſt, finding himſelf thoroughly eſtabliſhed upon the throne, publiſhed an edict againſt the Arians, depriving them of all their churches.—Theodorick was highly offended at this edict. He obliged Pope John I. together with four of the principal Senators of Rome (one of whom was Symmachus, father-in-law to Boethius) to go on an embaſſy to Conſtantinople; and commanded them to threaten

A. D. 524.

threaten that he would aboliſh the Catholick religion throughout Italy, if the Emperor did not immediately revoke his edict againſt the Arians.—John was received at Conſtantinople with extraordinary pomp, and treated with profound reſpect. He tried to compromiſe matters betwixt the two princes: but ſo far was he from inducing the Emperor to revoke his edict, that, in compliance with the tenor of it, he reconciled many of the Arian churches to the Catholick Faith.—Theodorick was ſo incenſed at his conduct, and of his aſſociates in this affair, that upon their return he threw them all into priſon at Ravenna. Boethius, though entirely innocent of what was done at Conſtantinople, was at the ſame time ordered into ſtricter confinement at Pavia; the king having probably come to the reſolution of proceeding to extremities againſt him.

Though

Though confined in a doleful priſon, and deſerted by all the world—though deprived of his library, and ſtript of all his poſſeſſions—our illuſtrious Philoſopher preſerved ſo much vigour and compoſure of mind, that he wrote, in five books, his excellent treatiſe of the Conſolation of Philoſophy. To this treatiſe our author is more indebted for his fame, than to all his other learned performances. Few books have been more popular: it has gone through a multitude of editions; has been commented upon by many eminent men; has been tranſlated into a great variety of languages; and has been univerſally acknowledged a work replete with erudition and inſtruction, and executed with much delicacy and good taſte. When we conſider the diſtreſſed ſituation of our author when he wrote it, we are filled with wonder that he was capable of compoſing

poſing a performance of ſo much real genius and merit.

Several of the commentators upon Boethius ſuppoſe that he was interrupted, by death, in the execution of this work. Their conjecture is not improbable; as our author, though a zealous Catholick, takes no notice of the comforts ariſing from the Chriſtian religion to perſons in calamitous circumſtances; which are far more certain and ſatisfactory than thoſe derived from Philoſophy. They are therefore of opinion, that, if he had lived, he would have added a ſixth book to his celebrated treatiſe; and would have ſhewn how much ſuperior the topicks of conſolation, delivered to us in the New Teſtament, are to all others. If this was his deſign, it is much to be regretted that he was not ſuffered to live till he had accompliſhed it.

But

But the fatal moment was now faſt approaching, which put a period to the
27 May, 526. miſeries of Boethius. As a prelude to this, Pope John was famiſhed to death in priſon; and ſoon afterwards Theodorick ordered Symmachus, and the three other Senators that were ſent to Conſtantinople on the embaſſy before-mentioned, to be beheaded. To compleat his cruelty, he commanded the ſame puniſhment to be inflicted on Boethius, in his priſon at Pavia, on the 23d of October 526, in the 71ſt year of his age.—His body was interred by the inhabitants of Pavia, in the church of St. Auguſtine, near to the ſteps of the chancel; where his monument * is ſtill

* This monument was erected to his memory by the emperor Otho III. A. D. 996, who ordered Boethius's bones to be taken up, and placed in a ſhrine of marble upon the top of it.

to be ſeen, inſcribed with the following epitaph, which is not written with much elegance:

Meoniæ et Latiæ linguæ clariſſimus, et qui
Conſul eram, hic perii, miſſus in exilium:
Sed quem mors rapuit, probitas evexit ad auras;
Et nunc fama viget maxima, vivit opus.

I have thus paraphraſed it:

Thrice honour'd with the Conſul's office high,
And deeply ſkill'd in Greek and Latian lore;
In exile here by violence muſt I die,
And never ſee my friends and country more?

But Death diſſolves nought but my earthly frame;
My ſoul releas'd ſhall gain its native ſeat;
My learned works ſhall ever ſpread my fame,
And Rome with pride my praiſes ſhall repeat.

King

King Theodorick, as we are informed by Procopius, regretted theſe acts of violence, and did not long ſurvive them. Some months afterwards, when the head of a great fiſh was ſerved up to him at ſupper, he imagined he beheld the head of Symmachus fiercely threatening him. Terrified with this apparition, he roſe from table, and went to bed in an agony; and after bitterly deploring to his phyſician his cruelty in reſpect to Symmachus and Boethius, he became delirious, and in a few days expired.—Amalaſuntha, the daughter of Theodorick, who upon the deceaſe of her father governed Italy with ſingular prudence and juſtice, as tutreſs to her ſon Athalarick, lamented the fate of this eminent man, and expreſſed the utmoſt reſpect for his memory. To make all the atonement in her power for the

injuries her father had done him, ſhe cauſed his ſtatues, which had been overthrown at Rome during his perſecution, to be again erected, and all his poſſeſſions to be reſtored to his heirs.

BOETHIUS's

BOETHIUS'S

CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY.

BOOK I.

Boethius deplores his misfortunes in a pathetic elegy.——Philoſophy appears to him.——She commands the muſes to leave him.——Expreſſes her concern for him.——Adduces examples of wiſe men who had ſtruggled with equal difficulties.——Boethius relates to Philoſophy his merits.——He notifies to her his accuſation and baniſhment.——Declares the ſanctity and integrity of his life.——Laments the loſs of his dignities and reputation.——Philoſophy conſoles him.——She enquires particularly into the troubles of his mind, and the cauſes of them.

Boethius deplores his misfortunes in a pathetic elegy.

IN flower of youth, with love of learning bleſt,
My verſe was wont in cheerful ſtrains to flow;
But now, by Fortune's cruel rage oppreſt,
I mourn in numbers ſuited to my woe.

The ſacred Nine, companions of my grief,
Their ſoften'd features wet with many a tear,
Try all their pleaſing art to give relief,
And whiſper verſe mellifluous in my ear.

They, faithful friends, ſtill trace my woful ways,
Regardleſs of the haughty tyrant's rage,
Whilom, the glory of my youthful days,
Now, the chief ſolace of my drooping age.

Silver'd my hairs, and furrow'd deep my brow,
Unbrac'd each nerve, tho' ſcarce beyond my prime,
With rapid haſte borne on the wings of wo,
Old age advances, not on wings of time.

Happy the man, with health and affluence bleſt,
Into whoſe halcyon days intrudes not death;
From ceaſeleſs wo, ſtill happier who finds reſt,
And yields to fate, long-wiſh'd, his willing breath.

Death, kind deliv'rer from all grief and pain,
Why ſtays thy hand my weeping eyes to cloſe?
Thy aid, ah cruel! I implore in vain;
Deaf to my cries, thou wilt not give repoſe.

With gladd'ning beams, while treach'rous fortune ſhone,
Diſeaſe had almoſt ſnatch'd my bliſs away,
With every joy, ſince now the wanton's flown,
Why does ſlow time ſtill lengthen out my day?

Why

Why did you boaſt of my exalted ſtate?
Miſtaken friends, were ye not much to blame?
Learn this *great truth*, from my diſaſtrous fate,
All human bliſs is but an empty name.

Philoſophy appears to Boethius.

Whilſt I vented my grief in theſe melancholy ſtrains, and, with tears ſtreaming from my eyes, was committing them to paper, I was ſtruck with the appearance of a woman, whoſe countenance was altogether auguſt and venerable. Her eyes ſparkled with fire, and her look was far more piercing than that of any mortal. Her complexion was comely and healthful, and ſhe ſeemed to poſſeſs all the vigour of youth; nevertheleſs her appearance was ſuch as denoted her to have lived many years, and that her exiſtence began long before the preſent age. The height of her ſtature could not be determined, as ſhe varied it at pleaſure; now, ſhe ſeemed to contract herſelf to the ordinary ſize of men; anon, ſhe appeared to reach the ſkies with her head; nay, ſhe would at times elevate herſelf ſtill higher, and penetrate ſo far into the heavens, as to ſurmount the reach of the moſt acute and diſcerning eye. The ſtuff of which her robe was compoſed was indiſſoluble; it was of the fineſt thread, woven with wonderful art, and was the work of her own hands, as I learned from her afterwards. But as ſmoke and duſt obſcures ancient pictures, ſo neglect and the ruſt of antiquity had rendered the beauty of this

ſtuff ſcarcely to be diſcerned. On the lower part of her garment was embroidered in a large and ſtrong character the letter P, on the upper G; the former denoting Philoſophy; the latter, God; and betwixt theſe two letters a flight of ſtairs was delineated, ſignifying that the aſcent to God was by philoſophy *.

This admirable garment, however, had been rent by the fury of ſome violent men †, who had torn ſeveral ſhreds out of it, and carried them off. Thus did ſhe appear; and to conclude, ſhe held ſome writings in her right hand, and a ſcepter in her left.

Philoſophy commands the Muſes to leave Boethius.

Beholding the Muſes, the inſpirers of ſong, ſtanding round my bed, and lending words to my grief, ſhe was diſpleaſed; and looking upon them with a ſtern and threatening aſpect, Who

* In the original, the letter marked on the lower part of the garment is the Greek letter π; on the upper part of it, is the Greek letter Θ. The interpretation I have given of the meaning of theſe letters being marked on the robe of Philoſophy; that the former letter ſignifies Philoſophy, and the latter God, is the moſt natural, and probably the true meaning. Moſt of the commentators, however, underſtand by π the practice of philoſophy, and by Θ the theory of it. Theory, ſay they, is placed in the upper part of the garment, becauſe contemplative philoſophy is more noble than practical; and a flight of ſtairs, they add, is placed betwixt the letters, denoting that ſtudents of wiſdom ought to aſcend to the one, and deſcend to the other; becauſe there can be no exerciſe of virtue without a contemplation of truth, nor can there be any uſeful contemplation of truth without the practice of virtue.

† Thoſe who by prejudice and precipitancy wreſt and abuſe philoſophy, and do neither contemplate truth, nor exerciſe virtue.

gives

gives permiſſion, ſays ſhe, to theſe ſoul-enervating daughters of the theatre, to approach this diſconſolate perſon? So far are they from remedying his woes by any art of theirs, that they nouriſh them by their ſoft and enfeebling poiſons. It is *they* who teach their votaries to choke and deſtroy, by the pernicious brambles of the paſſions, the moſt abundant and uſeful crops of reaſon. They may indeed ſooth and indulge the mind in its grief; but they cannot reſtore it to comfort. If by your deceitful careſſes, added ſhe, you had ſeduced one of the profane, as you are daily wont to do, ſmall would have been my concern: I ſhould not thereby have been injured; for it is only in the ſons of wiſdom I am intereſted. But whom do you attack? One who has been trained up from his infancy in the principles of Zeno *

* The Zeno here mentioned was the inventor of logick. He was of Elea, a city of Lucania, and flouriſhed long before the celebrated founder of the Stoicks, of the ſame name. Boethius might well be ſaid to be trained up in the principles of Zeno, as he was the moſt profound and expert logician in his time.

The academy whence the academicks were named, was a celebrated gymnazium or place of exerciſe, in the ſuburbs of Athens, where the profeſſors of that ſchool uſed to hold their lectures and public diſputations. The founder of it was Plato the diſciple of Socrates. Plato's nephew Speuſippus, who was left the heir of his ſchool, continued his lectures, as his ſucceſſors alſo did in the academy, and preſerved the name of academicks; whilſt Ariſtotle, the moſt eminent of Plato's ſcholars, retired to another gymnazium called the Lyceum; where, from a cuſtom which he and his followers obſerved, of teaching and diſputing as they walked, they obtained the name of Peripateticks,

and the Academy.—Be gone! ye baneful ſirens, with your ſtrains that enchant to deſtruction. Be gone! leave him to me; it is only my ſober muſe that can effectuate his cure. Struck with theſe reproaches, the tuneful choir caſt down their eyes with reſpect; and teſtifying their ſhame by their glowing cheeks, they immediately left the room, and, filled with ſorrow, fled her preſence. As for myſelf, my eyes were blinded by a flood of tears, ſo that I could not diſcover who this auguſt dame was, endued with an authority ſo abſolute. I was amazed; with my countenance fixed on the ground, I waited in ſilence her plea-

or Walking Philoſophers. Theſe two ſects, though differing in name, agreed generally in things, or in all the principal points of their philoſophy: they placed the chief happineſs of man in virtue, with a competency of external goods; taught the exiſtence of a God, a providence, the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments.

The academicks mentioned above were denominated the diſciples of the Old Academy. But Arceſilaus, the fifth maſter of the Academy from Plato, diſcarded the ſyſtems of his predeceſſors, and revived the Socratick way, of affirming nothing, and doubting of all things. He and his followers taught, that in all caſes men ought to ſuſpend their aſſent, and content themſelves with opinion grounded on probability, which was all that a rational mind had to acquieſce in; but in other matters they generally agreed with their predeceſſors. This was called the New Academy, in diſtinction from the Platonic or the Old.

Boethius was a great maſter of the Greek philoſophy, and was perfectly acquainted with the opinions of all the different ſects. But his own principles were founded chiefly on thoſe of the Old Academy and the Peripateticks. Theſe were the pureſt ſources to draw from, and this was the philoſophy which he had imbibed from his early youth.

The account of the Academy and of the Peripateticks, in this note, is taken from Middleton's Life of Cicero, vol. iii. p. 327-8-9.

ſure.

ſure. She ſoon approached, and ſat down on the foot of my bed; and beholding my dejected eye, and my face disfigured with grief, ſhe bewailed my wretched condition in the following moving ſtrains:

Philoſophy expreſſes her concern for Boethius.

Ah! hapleſs ſtate of human race!
How quick do all their pleaſures paſs!
And too, too weak their minds to bear
Life's varied ſcenes of woe and care.
When grief's ſharp thorn the heart aſſails,
Of wiſdom's ſons the purpoſe fails;
Their boaſted vigour ſoon gives way,
Dark melancholy clouds their day;
The helm no longer reaſon ſteers,
But lawleſs paſſion domineers.
Too ſad a proof of this, alas!
Ah, wretched mortal, is your caſe!
Whilſt undiſgrac'd and unconfin'd,
How firm and vigorous was your mind!
Still ranging with unwearied view
Creation's ample circuit thro'.
The ſun, refulgent ſource of day,
You trac'd o'er all his radiant way;
The moon that ſhines with borrowed light,
And cheers with radiance mild the night,
The ſilver moon's myſterious round
Was by your magic numbers bound;
The planets too that wand'ring go,
And ſeem no ſettled courſe to know,

Their periods, various and perplex'd,
Were, by your art victorious, fix'd;
Your tow'ring genius could reſolve
* What makes the heaven's vaſt frame revolve,
Whilſt all the lights that gild the ſkies,
In order, daily ſet and riſe;
You too could tell, where nature forms
Her mighty magazines of ſtorms,
Which with impetuous fury roll,
And ſhake the earth from pole to pole;
Why Spring awakes the genial hours,
And decks th' enamell'd field with flow'rs,
You knew;—and why kind Autumn's hand
Diffuſes plenty o'er the land:
Thro' all her mazes you purſued
Coy Nature, and her ſecrets view'd.
But ah! ſad change! that ſoaring mind
Is now diſconſolate and blind;
To earth-born cares a wretched prey,
And all the man is ſunk away.
Relentleſs fate has fix'd thoſe eyes
To earth, that whilom pierc'd the ſkies.

But it is my buſineſs, at preſent, continued ſhe, to ſeek a remedy for you woes, and not to waſte time in fruitleſs lamentations. Then fixing her eyes ſteadily upon me, What, ſays ſhe, art thou he who formerly drank of my milk, and fed on

* By this we are to underſtand the *primum mobile* in the Ptolomean ſyſtem.

my

my choiceſt nouriſhment, and thence derived ſuch firmneſs and vigour of mind? I furniſhed you with armour which would have rendered you invincible, if you had not thrown it aſide. Do you not know me? Why don't you ſpeak? Is it from ſhame or inſenſibility that you are ſilent? Would to heaven it were a ſenſe of ſhame that reſtrained you! But I plainly perceive that it is a benumbing ſtupor that locks up all your faculties.—When ſhe found that I continued not only ſilent, but deprived of the power of ſpeech, ſhe applied her hand gently to my breaſt, and ſaid with a ſmile, There is not much here to be dreaded; his diſeaſe is a lethargy of the mind, the uſual effect of violent and diſordered paſſions. He has only forgotten himſelf; when he perceives me he will awake from this ſtate of oblivion. To enable him to do this, let us ſoftly wipe his eyes, darkened with clouds ariſing from terreſtrial objects. Having thus ſpoke, ſhe took up the ſkirt of her robe, and contracting it into a fold, ſhe applied it gently to my eyes, and dried the tears which fell in abundance.

Her touch diſpell'd the darkneſs of my ſoul *,
Again mine eyes with wonted vigour roll;
So,—from the eaſt, when ſudden fogs ariſe,
And heavy vapours darken all the ſkies,

* The tranſlation of this metrum was communicated to me by an ingenious friend.

In

In ſhades obſcure is hid the ſolar light,
On cheerleſs earth deſcends the noon-day night:
If then the north wind, from his Thracian cave,
Sweep thro' the heavens, and bruſh along the wave,
Forth ſprings the ſun with unreſiſted ray,
And Nature hails the glad return of day.

The clouds of melancholy being *thus* diſpelled, I began to breathe more freely. I lifted up my eyes, and recovered my apprehenſion ſo far as to recollect the features of her who had wrought upon me ſuch a ſudden cure. I beheld her with attention, and ſoon diſcovered her to be *Philoſophy*, my dear and antient nurſe; in whoſe *houſe*, and under whoſe diſcipline I had been tutored from my very infancy. Ah! ſays I, beloved miſtreſs of all the virtues, is it you? and have you deigned to deſcend from heaven to viſit me in this doleful manſion, where I am deſerted by all the world? Guiltleſs as you totally are, ſhall you be involved with me in trouble, and expoſed to the falſe accuſations laid to my charge?—Shall I, my beloved pupil, replied ſhe, ſhall I forſake you? Shall I not bear my ſhare in that load of wo, which the hatred of mankind overwhelms you with, on my account? It would be criminal in Philoſophy to deſert the ſteps of the worthy man, however unfortunate. And why do you imagine I ſhould be afraid of an accuſation, and diſturbed with it, as ſomething altogether new? Is it the

firſt

firſt time that Philoſophy has been aſſaulted by the impious? In antient times, and even before the age of my Plato, have I not often contended with the folly and temerity of men? And during the life of that amiable philoſopher, did not his maſter Socrates triumph over an unjuſt death *, by my aſſiſtance? The rout of † Epicureans, Stoicks, and

* The hiſtory of Socrates, the moſt illuſtrious character for wiſdom and virtue in all heathen antiquity, and the manner of his death, is univerſally known. Eraſmus ſays in one of his dialogues, that he never read the glorious end of Socrates, but he exclaimed, *Sancte Socrates! ora pro nobis*;—O ſaint Socrates! pray for us.

† Epicurus, the founder of the Epicureans, was of Gargetium in the neighbourhood of Athens. He died about 271 years before the chriſtian æra. The Epicureans held pleaſure to be the chief good of man; death the extinction of his being; and placed their happineſs conſequently in the ſecure enjoyment of a pleaſurable life; eſteeming virtue on no other account, than as it was a handmaid to pleaſure, and helped to enſure the poſſeſſion of it, by preſerving health and conciliating friends. Their wiſe man, therefore, had no other duty but to provide for his own eaſe, to decline all ſtruggles, to retire from public affairs, and to imitate the life of their gods, by paſſing his days in a calm, contemplative, and undiſturbed repoſe, in the midſt of rural ſhades and pleaſant gardens.

Epicurus, by all accounts we have of him, was a very amiable man, calm, temperate, and benevolent: but it muſt, however, be confeſſed, that the principles which he taught had a very bad influence upon mankind.

Zeno was the founder of the Stoicks, who took their name from στοα, a porch or portico; for it was in a ſpacious and finely embelliſhed portico in Athens, where they uſed to meet and diſpute. Zeno was born at Citium, a ſea-port town in the iſland of Cyprus, and died at the age of 98, 264 years before the birth of our Saviour.

The Stoicks were the bigots or enthuſiaſts in philoſophy, who held none to be truly wiſe and good but themſelves. They believed in one ſupreme God, who governed the world, and every thing in it, by his providence; they held fate and predeſtination, inculcated apathy or freedom

and ſeveral other ſects, wanted to get immediate poſſeſſion of the inheritance of this truly divine man; and becauſe I oppoſed them, and ſtrove againſt them, they fell upon me as if I had been a part of their prey; tore this robe, which I had woven with my own hands, and going away with ſhreds of it, they vainly imagined they had obtained poſſeſſion of me, and of all my treaſures. Their raſhneſs was the cauſe, that others, who were equally ignorant, beholding them clothed with my ſpoils, were credulous enough to believe that they belonged to me, and were my genuine diſciples.

Philoſophy adduces examples of wiſe men who had ſtruggled with difficulties.

But if you are not ſo well acquainted with the flight of Anaxagoras *, the poiſoning of Socrates,

freedom from all paſſions; placed perfect happineſs in virtue, though ſtript of every other good; affirmed all ſins to be equal, all deviations from right equally wicked; taught that a wiſe man could never forgive, never be moved by anger, favour or pity, never be deceived, never repent, never change his mind.

The principles of the Stoicks, it muſt be acknowledged, were too rigorous, and abounded too much with paradoxes. But the beſt men of antiquity were of this ſect, and rendered it very illuſtrious. Part of the ſhort account of the principles of the Epicureans and Stoicks, in the above note, are taken from Middleton's excellent Life of Cicero, p. 360, 362.

There were ſeveral other ſects of philoſophers among the Greeks, which Boethius here alludes to, but does not particularly mention.

* One of the illuſtrious philoſophers in antiquity: he lived before Socrates, and was of Clazomene in Ionia. He was the diſciple of Anaximenes, and applied himſelf entirely to natural philoſophy, and ſaid he was born to contemplate the ſun, the moon, and ſtars. He dwelt long at Athens, but was at length obliged to fly from it, for advancing doctrines contrary to the received opinions in that city.

and

and the torments which Zeno * endured, becauſe theſe philoſophers were not of your own country; you muſt certainly have a thorough knowledge of the tragical ſtories of † Canius, of Seneca, and Soranus, whoſe memory is ſtill ſo recent, and ſo much celebrated. The ſole cauſe of whoſe misfortunes was, that having imbibed my precepts, their manners were incompatible with thoſe of the impious men, who were inveſted with the ſupreme power. Be not therefore ſurprized, if in the ocean of life we ſhould meet with the ſevereſt ſtorms, as we propoſe to ourſelves no other end but to diſpleaſe the wicked; who, though a very numerous tribe, are more to be deſpiſed than dreaded; becauſe, having no chief to unite and govern them, they are actuated by the unſteady counſels of Error and Phrenzy. Impelled by their malice, ſhould they attack us with advantage

* The Zeno here mentioned, was the inventor of logick. As he was the chief in a conſpiracy to reſtore liberty to his country, he was, upon the diſcovery of it, moſt cruelly tortured by Nearchus, tyrant of Elea.

† Canius was an excellent philoſopher; he was condemned to death by the emperor Caligula; and endured it, as Seneca relates, with amazing fortitude. The hiſtory of Seneca, the famous philoſopher, and tutor of Nero, and the death he underwent, are known to all the world. Bareas Soranus was cotemporary with Seneca; he was an eminent philoſopher, and a man of the greateſt integrity. His virtues were ſo offenſive to Nero, that he was put to death by the tyrant. The expreſſion of Tacitus, concerning him and Thraſeas Pætus, is remarkable: "After the murder of ſo many excellent perſons, Nero at laſt formed a deſire of cutting off virtue itſelf, in the execution of Thraſeas Pætus and Bareas Soranus."

in

in the open field, Reaſon, our guide, collects her ſcattered forces, and retires within her ramparts. The wicked, in the mean while, employ themſelves in pillaging our uſeleſs baggage; but we, little regarding their impotent fury, laugh at them whilſt they deprive us of ſo poor a booty, entrenched as we are in a fortreſs inſurmountable to all the attempts of folly.

The man who triumphs over fate,
Determined is,—in every ſtate;—
Elated not,—with gladdening rays,
When fortune beautifies his days;
And when ſhe's treach'rous, ſhifts the ſcene,
Still undejected and ſerene:
When angry ocean ſwells and raves,
He ſcorns its moſt tempeſtuous waves;
When earthquakes ſhake, and thunders roll,
They daunt not his intrepid ſoul.
Should nature's frame disjointed fly *,
And the whole world in ruins lie,
He unconcern'd the ſhock would hear,
Nor to his breaſt admit a fear.
Such vigour marks the truly ſage;—
Why fear you then the tyrant's rage?
In virtue wrapt, all cares above,
The wiſe nor hopes nor fears can move;
Lord of himſelf, ſecure he reigns,
Deſpiſing priſons, racks and chains.

* In this paraphraſe, the tranſlator has had a very celebrated paſſage of Horace in his view.

But

But hapleſs he who quits his ſhield,
And daſtardly reſigns the field:
Wretched the man whoſe heart gives way,
And ſinks to fear and grief a prey;
Do what he liſts, fly where he will,
Theſe baneful paſſions haunt him ſtill;
To break his fetters, and regain
Sweet peace, his efforts all are vain.

Do theſe ſtrains affect you? Do they reach your heart? Or are you as inſenſible to them as the aſs is to the ſound of the lyre*? You weep; —why this profuſion of tears? Speak,—conceal nothing—you can expect no aſſiſtance from a phyſician, unleſs you diſcover to him your malady. Struck with theſe words, I recollected ſomewhat of my long-loſt vigour, and thus addreſſed her. Alas! why need I enter into a recital of my woes? With regard to me, is not fortune's unrelenting rage but too apparent? Are not you ſtruck with the horror of this place? Do you find here the library, which, in my houſe, you choſe for your reſidence? that library, where, bleſt with your converſe, I was taught every ſcience human and divine. Was ſuch my apparel? Was my countenance ſuch, when with you I was wont to explore the ſecrets of nature? when with your compaſs you deſcribed to me the courſes of the ſtars, and taught me, by that order and harmony

* Deaf as the aſs to the ſound of the lyre, was a Greek proverb.

ſo conſpicuous in the heavens, to form my manners and the whole tenour of my life? Is this then all the reward you confer upon your faithful follower?—From the mouth of your Plato, you pronounced this fine ſaying, "That happy were "the ſtates, whoſe princes were philoſophers, or, "whoſe magiſtrates, applied themſelves to the "ſtudy of wiſdom *." Inſpired by thee, the ſame illuſtrious perſon recommends it as the indiſpenſable duty of philoſophers, to take upon them the management of public affairs, leſt the reins of government ſhould fall into the hands of unprincipled profligates, who would thereby become the plague and ruin of every worthy citizen †.

Boethius relates to Philoſophy his merits.

Relying upon this authority, I had nothing ſo much at heart, during my public adminiſtration, as to reduce to practice the inſtructions which I learned from you in our ſtudious retirement. God, who infuſes your leſſons into the hearts of the truly wiſe, and you yourſelf, are conſcious, that I brought along with me into the magiſtracy no other principle, but a generous and impartial zeal for the welfare of the virtuous. Hence I was involved in perpetual and irreconcileable diſcord with the wicked; but the conſciouſneſs of my integrity inſpired me with an invariable con-

* This maxim of Plato is taken from the 5th book of his Republic.

† The advice here given to philoſophers, to take upon them the direction of public affairs, is to be found in Plato's 6th dialogue, concerning a Republic.

tempt of the reſentment of the great, and prompted me reſolutely to perſevere in ſupporting the rights of equity. How often have I oppoſed myſelf to Conigaſtus *, when he was oppreſſing the weak, and bereaving them of their poſſeſſions? How often have I put a ſtop to the iniquitous proceedings of Triquilla, the ſuperintendent of the king's houſhold, and diſconcerted his ſchemes when almoſt ripe for execution? How frequently have I riſked my authority in protecting thoſe unhappy citizens, whom the lawleſs barbarians had charged with innumerable ſlanders, in hopes of ſharing the plunder of their fortunes? There is no man that can reproach me with deviating from the paths of juſtice, into thoſe of fraud and oppreſſion. While the provinces were oppreſſed with private rapine, and the weight of public taxes, I beheld their fate with concern, and grieved no leſs than the unhappy ſufferers themſelves. In the time of a ſevere famine, when the province of Campania was ordered to ſupply the city of Rome with ſuch a vaſt quantity of corn as would have intirely ruined it, I entered into a very warm expoſtulation with the prefect of the palace †, in the preſence of the king; and got

 that

* Conigaſtus was probably a farmer or receiver-general of the taxes.

† The prefect of the palace was originally the captain of the cohorts that attended the emperor as his guard. It became afterwards an office of the higheſt power and dignity in the empire. To the perſon inveſted with it, was committed the adminiſtration of juſtice, the management

that fine country relieved of the unreaſonable burthen. I delivered Paulinus, a worthy conſular, from the jaws of the courtiers, who, impelled by avarice and ambition, were like greedy dogs, already devouring him and his great wealth, in their wicked imaginations. In defence of Albinus, another of the conſulars, I expoſed myſelf to the reſentment of Cyprian, an infamous informer, who had laid a plot to deſtroy that reſpectable ſenator by a falſe accuſation. Is it not then ſufficiently manifeſt, what a load of enmity and bitter reſentment I muſt have incurred? But after all, I thought I had the more reaſon to expect friendſhip and ſupport from the reſt of mankind; as from my love of juſtice, I had forfeited all favour at court, and thrown myſelf out of its protection.

Boethius notifies his accuſation and baniſhment.

But let us ſee who were my accuſers: one Baſilius, who was formerly diſmiſſed with infamy from the king's ſervice, and who turned informer againſt me in hopes of relieving his neceſſities with my ſpoils; one Opilio, and one Gaudentius, who, for their innumerable frauds and extortions, were baniſhed by a royal mandate, and who, refuſing to ſubmit to this ſentence, fled for ſanctuary

management of the finances, and the ſuperintendency of the preſidents or governors of provinces. King Theodorick, as it is obſerved in the life of Boethius, p. 5. wiſely ruled the Romans, by the ſame laws, the ſame polity, and the ſame magiſtrates they were accuſtomed to under the emperors. Hence it was, that for many years they were pleaſed with his government.

ary to one of the ſacred edifices; whereof, when the king was informed, he commanded them, if before a certain day they departed not from Ravenna *, to be ſeized, ſtigmatized in the forehead, and driven out of the city. What could be more diſgraceful than this intended chaſtiſement? But on the very day it was to be executed, they accuſed me, and obtained credit enough to get their accuſations received and attended to. Wherein, may I aſk you, has my conduct deſerved this injuſtice? Was there any ſhadow of equity in liſtening to the teſtimony of three profligates already condemned? If Fortune is not aſhamed of the accuſation of injured innocence, one would think ſhe might at leaſt bluſh at the baſeneſs and infamy of its accuſers. But you want to be informed of the crime laid to my charge:—I am accuſed with endeavouring to preſerve the ſenate. But you aſk me how? It is ſaid, that I hindered an informer from producing proofs, which would have convicted that aſſembly of treaſon. What do you think of this, my dear miſtreſs †? Shall I deny the crime, that

* A city of Italy, upon the coaſt of the Adriatick, lying to the north of Rome, and diſtant from it about 200 miles. Several of the later weſtern emperors had fixed their reſidence in this city, that they might be at hand to reſtrain the irruptions of the barbarians, who on that ſide broke into Italy. For the ſame reaſon, Theodorick, and his ſucceſſors the kings of the Goths, and afterwards, the *exarchs* or governors of Italy under the eaſtern emperors, continued to make it the ſeat of government.

† Boethius ſays this ironically.

you may not be aſhamed of me? No, I freely acknowledge that I had the preſervation of the ſenate always at heart, and that I ſhall never ceaſe to promote its intereſt. Shall I therefore confeſs the charge? But it certainly ought to be my buſineſs to embarraſs my informers, and not to yield up to them my cauſe. Shall I own it a crime to wiſh the ſafety of that aſſembly? Its iniquitous deciſions with regard to me, gives it indeed the appearance of one. Although, for want of reflection, mankind deceive and impoſe upon themſelves, this does not alter the nature of things. Beſides, I do not think it lawful, and I have Socrates's authority for it, either to conceal the truth, or acknowledge a falſhood. With regard to this, however, I ſubmit myſelf to your judgment, and to the opinions of the wiſe. At all events, I ſhall take particular care to tranſmit a faithful account of the circumſtances of my proſecution to poſterity, having them rivetted in my memory, and preſerved in writing. But why ſhould I ſpend time, in ſpeaking to you of the forged letters, wherein I am charged with wiſhing the reſtoration of Roman liberty? The villainy of this contrivance I could have eaſily detected, if I had been allowed to have made uſe of the confeſſions of my accuſers; but this privilege was denied to me, though of the greateſt importance to my juſtification. But alas! are there the ſmalleſt

remains

remains of liberty to be hoped for? Would to heaven there were! Then, I would have anſwered as Canius did, when he was accuſed by the emperor Caligula, of being acquainted with a conſpiracy againſt his life; "If I had been privy to any ſuch thing," ſaid he to the tyrant, "you ſhould never have known it." But after all, my ſorrow and vexation have not deprived me ſo much of the uſe of my faculties, as to make me think it ſtrange, that the impious ſhould form attempts againſt virtue; but what ſurprizes me above meaſure, is to behold their attempts crowned with ſucceſs. To will evil is an effect of our corruption; but to commit it, to oppreſs innocence with impunity, under the eye of a Deity who ſees every thing—to me appears a prodigy. Hence it was, that one of your diſciples, not improperly, put this queſtion: If there is a God, whence proceeds *evil?* If there is none, whence ariſes *good?* But though wicked men, who thirſt after the blood of the ſenate, and of all the virtuous citizens whoſe intereſts I always vigorouſly ſupported, might very naturally wiſh my deſtruction; did I deſerve ſuch uſage from the venerable fathers themſelves?

Boethius declares the ſanctity and integrity of his life.

You will undoubtedly remember, you who were always preſent with me, and directed me in all my words and actions; you will remember, I ſay, with what entire inattention to my own ſafety I defended the innocence of the ſenate at

Verona; when the king, desirous of their destruction, endeavoured to transfer the crime of high treason, whereof Albinus was accused, upon the whole of that assembly. You know what I now say to be true, and that I take no delight in extolling myself. For in my opinion, a man who seeks to raise his reputation by vaunting his good deeds, lessens, in some measure, the secret satisfaction that springs from a self-approving conscience. But what have I gained by my integrity? Instead of receiving the recompence of disinterested virtue, I suffer the punishment due to the blackest crime. Was there ever a criminal condemned by judges so unanimously severe, but that in some of their breasts a sense, either of human frailty, or the instability of fortune, to which all are subjected, did not awake sentiments of compassion, and cause them to vary in their verdicts? If I had been accused of meditating to set the sacred temples in flames, of designing to sheathe my impious poignard in the bosoms of the priests, of attempting the lives of all the virtuous and the good; yet I ought to have been present at my trial, nor should any sentence have past upon me, 'till I had made a confession of my crime, or had been fairly convicted of it. But now, for my zealous affection and attachment to the senate, unheard and undefended, I am, at the distance of five hundred miles, proscribed and condemned to death. O, my judges! well do you deserve that no future patriot should arise

to

to be convicted of the like offence. My accuſers themſelves, perceiving the ſplendor of my merit, endeavoured to blacken it, by imputing to me one of the moſt atrocious crimes, and therefore feigned that I had polluted my conſcience with ſorcery *, in briguing for the conſulate. But, my ſovereign directreſs! you can atteſt the falſhood of this reproach; you, who have reigned ſo long miſtreſs of my breaſt, and rooted out thence every ignoble ſentiment; you know, that it was impoſſible for me to commit ſuch a crime under your inſpection. Daily are you ſounding in my ears, and inſinuating into my heart, that *golden ſentence* of Pythagoras, *Take God for your model.* Should I not then have acted very inconſiſtently, in ſeeking aſſiſtance from wicked and unlawful arts, when you had exalted my mind to the height of excellence, by forming it into a reſemblance of the Deity? Beſides, my houſe, which was as it were the ſanctuary of innocence; the ſociety of my friends, all people of the greateſt worth; the alliance of my father-in-law Symachus, a man of conſummate virtue, and for whom I have a reverence equal almoſt to that which I bear to yourſelf—all theſe conſiderations ought to have

* The common reading is *ſacrilegio*; but ſome commentators think, with much probability, that the true reading is *ſortilegio*; and that the crime which Boethius mentions with ſo much horror, was ſorcery, or the practiſing of magical arts. In the tranſlation I have followed this reading.

raiſed me far above the ſuſpicion of ſuch a crime. But, O horrid impiety! they impute my crime to you; and I am looked upon as a guilty perſon becauſe I have been educated under your diſcipline, and imbibed your morals. Thus, it is not enough, that the reverence due to you has been of no advantage to me; but you muſt beſides ſuffer reproach on my account.

Boethius laments the loſs of his dignities and reputation,

But my miſeries are compleat, when I reflect that the majority of mankind attend leſs to the merit of things, than to their fortuitous event; and believe that no undertakings are crowned with ſucceſs, but ſuch as are formed with a prudent foreſight. Hence it is, that the unproſperous immediately loſe the good opinion of mankind. It would give me pain to relate to you, the rumours that are flying among the people, and the variety of diſcordant and inconſiſtent opinions entertained concerning me. This only will I ſay, that the ſevereſt ſtroke the unfortunate can receive, is the perſuaſion that they ſuffer no more than what they deſerve. As to what regards myſelf, as I am now deprived of my poſſeſſions, my employments, and my reputation, I look upon the death which awaits me, as a favour. But ah! methinks I ſee the numerous band of the wicked, drunk and overflowing with joy, the abandoned race of informers contriving unheard-of villainies, the good dejected and filled with terror at my fate. I figure to myſelf the flagitious,

flagitious, daring every crime with impunity; nay, encouraged to perpetrate their abominable deeds by rewards; while the innocent are abandoned, deprived of their ſecurity, without protection, and without defence. Wherefore with reaſon may I thus exclaim:

Author of the ſtarry ſky,
Thou, who ſeated ſtill on high
On thine everlaſting throne,
Moveſt all;—unmov'd alone;
Thou, whoſe laws the ſtars obey,
Whirling round their rapid way,
Shining now with luſtre bright,
Now obſcur'd by Cynthia's light,
As ſhe to the ſun retires
Or more diſtant meets his fires;
While, brighteſt of the dewy throng,
Veſper leads the choir along,
And again renews his horn,
Cheerful meſſenger of morn.—
Thou, when winter waſtes the plain,
Setteſt day a ſhort-liv'd reign;
Thou, when ſummer blazeſt bright,
Wingeſt the ſlow hours of night;
Changing ſeaſons as they roll,
Providence divine extol,
What—tho' winter's rage deforms,—
Spring renews the waſte of ſtorms,
Summer ripens Ceres' ſtore,
Autumn flows with goodneſs o'er.

Thro'

Thro' her wide-extended round
Nature faſt in fate is bound;
Nothing ſtrays,—but human will,
(Ah too flexible to ill!)—
Sovereign Wiſdom, why ſhould man
Treſpaſs thus upon thy plan?
Blinded, why to reaſon's ray
Wanders he from virtue's way?
Why ſhould fortune, fickle dame,
Ceaſeleſs play her cruel game?
Deal to worth the doom ſevere,
Impious crimes deſerve to bear?
Seat the tyrant on a throne?
Bend the world beneath his frown?
Lift the profligate on high,
Vice abhorr'd to gratify?
Inſolent to tread in duſt
The brave, benevolent, and juſt?
See fair Virtue ſtript of all,
Languiſhing in want and thrall!
Lo!—ſhe flies to haunts obſcure,
To reſt from violence ſecure;
Still ſhe ſhines ſerenely great,
Happy in her calm retreat.
Crimes, alas! of deepeſt ſtain,
Rapine, perjury profane,
Fraud in lying colours clad,
Injure not, nor ſhame the bad!
Deep contriving miſchief ſtill,
Ah! they vex the world at will;

Work

Work by wicked arts the fall
Of kings rever'd and lov'd by all!
" O Thou, who gaveſt Order birth,
" Regard the miſeries of earth;
" For man, alas! creation's boaſt,
" In fortune's ſea is endleſs toſt!
" Gracious compoſe each ſtormy gale,
" Give his frail bark more ſmooth to ſail:
" O ſend that concord and that love
" To rule below, which rules above!"

When I had vented my grief in theſe melancholy ſtrains, ſhe, with a countenance ſerene and unruffled with my complaints, thus addreſſed me: When I ſaw you ſorrowful and in tears, I immediately knew you were miſerable and in exile; but I ſhould not have known how far you were baniſhed from your home, unleſs I had learned it from yourſelf. You have not, however, been driven from your country; but you have unhappily wandered from it: or, if you will have it that you have been baniſhed, you have baniſhed yourſelf; for it was not in the power of any mortal to do you ſuch an injury. Call to your remembrance of what country you are; it is not governed by a multitude as Athens was formerly; but it is ruled by one king, one lord, who, far from baniſhing his citizens, delights to ſee them encreaſe and flouriſh; it is ruled by a ſovereign who is poſſeſſed of true liberty, as from the perfection

Philoſophy conſoles Boethius.

fection of his nature he is incapable of doing evil, and abhors all unrighteouſneſs. Are you ignorant of that antient law of Rome, by which it is decreed to be unjuſt to baniſh any perſon thence that takes up his reſidence in it? A law founded upon this principle, that whoever hath obtained the happineſs of being ſettled within the bounds of ſo noble a city, can never be preſumed to deſerve the puniſhment of exile; but if he ceaſes to deſire to be an inhabitant of it, he then ceaſes to merit that privilege. This place, gloomy as it is, does not therefore move me ſo much as your melancholy aſpect. I am in no pain from the want of your library, whoſe walls were ſo richly adorned with glaſs and ivory; but it is the loſs of the compoſure and tranquillity of your mind that affects me. 'Twas there, 'twas in that precious repoſitory that I ſtored up, not books, but what gives books their value, the ſpirit and quinteſſence of my meditations and writings. As to what you have done for the public advantage, you have told me nothing but the truth; and you have mentioned few particulars in compariſon of what you might. With regard to the accuſations that have been brought againſt you, it is univerſally acknowledged that part of them tend greatly to your honour, while the reſt are palpable and malicious falſhoods. You judged right in recounting but ſlightly, the villainy and baſe artifices of the informers; as the public, who are ſenſible

ſible of their wickedneſs, in all its extent, will ſay much more upon this ſubject than it becomes you. You have inveighed ſeverely againſt the unjuſt decree of the ſenate. You have vented your affliction becauſe I am involved in your accuſation; and you have lamented the prejudice that is thereby done to my doctrines and inſtructions. You broke forth afterwards in a torrent of grief againſt fortune, and complained that mankind were not rewarded according to their merits. And at laſt, hurried away by your diſtempered muſe, you dared to wiſh that the ſpirit of peace, which rules in heaven, might rule the earth. But as I behold a crowd of various paſſions attacking you all at once; as I ſee you diſtracted by grief, rage, and melancholy, as this is the ſtate of your mind, it is not now a time to employ violent remedies; we ſhall at preſent therefore only apply ſome agreeable lenitives, whoſe gentle touch may in ſome meaſure mitigate the deep wound that rankles in your heart, and diſpoſe you to receive afterwards medicines ſtonger and more efficacious.

When Sol, reſplendent god of day,
From Cancer darts his ſcorching ray;
To the parch'd earth who truſts the ſeed
Can ne'er expect on Ceres gifts to feed.

From

From mountains of perpetual ſnow,
When Boreas' blaſts impetuous blow;
The lawns and woods the wand'ring ſwain
Explores for purple violets in vain.

Let tendrils in the ſpring eſcape
If thou would'ſt preſs the juicy grape
In Autumn, when gay Bacchus pours
With bounteous hand his ſoul-enlivening ſtores.

Who governs all, that Power ſublime
To every work a proper time
Has fix'd; preſumptuous then the man
Who counteracts wiſe Providence's plan.

Who impious from that order ſtrays,
And wanders in untrodden ways,
His toil aſſiduous with ſucceſs
Can never hope a righteous power will bleſs.

Philoſophy enquires more particularly into Boethius's troubles, and the cauſes of them.

Firſt then, allow me, continues ſhe, to aſk you a few queſtions upon the preſent ſtate of your mind, that I may know in what manner I ought to proceed in your cure. Aſk me what you pleaſe, replied I, I ſhall moſt willingly anſwer you. Tell me then, ſays ſhe, do you believe that the affairs of this world are under the direction of blind fortune, or conducted by a wiſe and rational intelligence? I can by no means believe, anſwered I, that the beautiful order we every where obſerve in nature, could proceed from the caprice

caprice and irregularity of chance. I know certainly that God, the creator of the univerſe, preſides over his work. There never was a day of my life, in which I heſitated a moment with regard to the certainty of this comfortable truth. I believe you, ſays ſhe; for a little while ſince you declared you were of this opinion, when deploring in your moving verſes the unfortunate ſtate of the human race, as alone deſtitute of the divine care, you allowed that all other things were guided by a rational intelligence. Ah! continued ſhe, I am above meaſure ſurprized, that you ſhould deſpond, when upheld by ſo comfortable a ſentiment! But we muſt ſearch farther; I am afraid there is ſome imperfection, ſome defect in this conviction. Tell me, then, ſince you have no doubt but that God governs the world, do you know by what œconomy or ſecret ſprings he governs it? The meaning of your queſtion, ſaid I, I do not thoroughly comprehend, and therefore cannot return the proper anſwer. Was I miſtaken then, added ſhe, when I told you there was ſome defect in your ſentiment upon this ſubject? it is by this weak place that theſe gloomy perturbations, as through a breach, have made way into your breaſt. But inform me, do you recollect for what end all things were created? or what is the purpoſe of this amazing frame of nature? I once knew, anſwered I, but grief has blotted every thing out of my memory.

Do you know, added ſhe, whence all things derive their exiſtence? This I know perfectly, replied I—from God. And how happens it, continued ſhe, that knowing the cauſe of all things, you ſhould be ignorant of their end? But the nature of theſe perturbations has ever been ſuch, as to ſhake and unſettle the minds of men; although not totally to oppreſs and overpower them. But pray anſwer me this queſtion: Do you remember you are a man? I am not ſo diſtempered, ſaid I, as to forget that. Can you tell me then, ſays ſhe, what man is? If you aſk me whether I know myſelf to be a rational and mortal creature, I know, replied I, and confeſs that I am. And do not you perceive, ſays ſhe, that you are ſomething more? I do not know, anſwered I, what more I am. I diſcover now another, added ſhe, and indeed the principal cauſe of your diſtemper. You no longer remember what you yourſelf are. Thus then have I, at the ſame time, found out the ſource of your malady, and the method of reſtoring you to health. For as you have forgotten what you are, you complain of your being baniſhed and ſtripped of your poſſeſſions; as you know not the end and purpoſe of things, you believe wicked and lawleſs men are powerful and happy; and as you are ignorant of the œconomy or ſecret ſprings by which the world is governed, you imagine that the viciſſitudes of life are the work of fortune, and that all human affairs float

at

at random, without the interpoſition of a ſupreme Ruler. Imaginations ſuch as theſe do not only generate diſeaſes of the ſoul, but if they are indulged, they will utterly ruin it. Give thanks, then, to the preſerver of your being, that nature has not totally failed in you. The encouragement I have to expect your cure, is derived from the juſt notions you entertain in relation to the government of the univerſe; that it is not left to chance, but is under the direction of God and his providence. Do not deſpair: this ſmall ſpark will ſoon produce heat enough to reſtore you to life. But as it is not now a proper time to make uſe of ſtrong remedies, and becauſe ſuch is the nature of the human ſoul, that no ſooner does it throw aſide true opinions, but it embraces falſe: and as hence there ariſes a miſt of gloomy emotions, which darkens the underſtanding, and gives it a fallacious view of objects; I ſhall therefore endeavour to diſſipate theſe vapours, by applying ſoft and gentle fomentations, ſo that the dark and deceitful illuſions of the paſſions being thus removed, you will rejoice when you behold the ſplendor of the true light ſhining in upon your mind.

* When clouds ariſe
And veil the ſkies,
Heav'n's ſhining hoſt
To ſight is loſt.— The

* The tranſlation of this metrum was done by my late worthy brother Mr. George Ridpath, miniſter of Stitchill, and author of the

The rolling wave
When tempeſts heave;
The glaſſy main,
Like ſkies ſerene
Erſt pure and bright,
Now bars the ſight;
So foul the flood
With boiling mud.—
The rapid brook
Which late forſook
The cloud-top'd hill,
Its devious rill
Finds oft withſtood,
By fragments rude
Loos'd from the rock
By waſte or ſhock.—
Then if you'd learn
Sure to diſcern
From falſe the true,
And to purſue
By Reaſon's light
The path of right;—
Falſe joys expel,
Vain terrors quell,

Border Hiſtory. Though the verſion is literal, it expreſſes the ſenſe of the original very clearly. The ſhort lines are a deſigned imitation of the numbers of the originals a ſpecimen of which I annex.

Nubibus atris
Condita nullum
Fundere poſſunt
Sidera lumen.

Hopes

Hopes that delude
And ſorrows brood.—
Groſs vapours blind,
Strong fetters bind.
The wretched ſoul,
Where *theſe* controul.

BOOK II.

Philoſophy exhorts Boethius not to torment himſelf upon account of his loſſes.——She deſcribes the inconſtancy and caprice of Fortune.——Expoſtulates with him in the name of Fortune.——Shows him that he is not miſerable, but poſſeſſed of much felicity.——Aſſures him that felicity doth not conſiſt in the gifts of Fortune.——That it is not to be found in riches.——Nor in power and honours.——Nor in glory and fame.——Philoſophy concludes this Book teaching Boethius that adverſe fortune is often profitable.

Philoſophy exhorts Boethius not to torment himſelf upon account of his loſſes.

AFTER this, the goddeſs pauſed a while, and having engaged my attention by her ſilence and compoſure, ſhe thus proceeded :—If I have rightly diſcovered the cauſes and nature of your diſtemper, you regret the loſs of your former fortune, and languiſh with the deſire of its return; 'tis this change of condition, which you are always revolving in your diſtempered imagination, that has overwhelmed your ſpirit. I know perfectly the innumerable tricks of Fortune, how

how ſhe flatters, with the moſt alluring proſpects, thoſe whom ſhe deſigns to deceive; and, when they are not in the leaſt apprehenſive of her inconſtancy, leaves them on a ſudden, and plunges them in deſpair. If you will but recall to your memory, the nature, the character, and manners of this *idol*, you will readily acknowledge, that ſhe never gave, nor hath ſhe deprived you of any thing ſo really eſtimable as to make you deſire the poſſeſſion of it again, or regret its loſs. But I flatter myſelf, I ſhall not have much difficulty to bring theſe things to your remembrance. You were wont to treat with a noble and manly diſdain, this deceitful Fortune, when ſhe approached you with the moſt flattering careſſes: you had conſtantly in your mouth, ſentences drawn from my magazines, with which you battled and repulſed her. But ſuch is the condition of humanity, that every ſudden change excites violent emotions in the breaſt, and bereaves it of tranquillity; and hence it is that your preſent diſtreſs ariſes. I ſhall now give you, as I before propoſed, ſome gentle and agreeable emollients, by which you may be prepared to receive with greater advantage, the more powerful cordials I have in reſerve. Approach then, Rhetorick, with all thy perſuaſive charms; whilſt under my guidance, thy captivating art is moſt ſalutary and beneficial. Come alſo, Muſick, another of my train, and pour forth thy melodious

ſtrains, at times cheerful and airy, and anon of a graver and more ſolemn tone.

The inconſtancy and caprice of Fortune.

What is it then, my friend, that has plunged you into ſuch an abyſs of ſorrow and miſery? You have undoubtedly beheld ſomething new and extraordinary. If you think Fortune has changed her behaviour towards you, you are in a miſtake. This is the character of the dame; it is her very nature. With reſpect to you, ſhe has preſerved her wonted conſiſtency, being conſtant in nothing but mutability: ſuch ſhe was, when ſhe careſſed you, when ſhe dazzled your eyes with falſe ſhews of felicity. You have ſeen the double face of this blind divinity; and ſhe who veils herſelf from others, has diſplayed herſelf wholly to you. If you approve her manners, conform to them, and do not complain. If you abhor her perfidy, deſpiſe it; and treat her with diſdain when ſhe is courting you with her dangerous flatteries. What occaſions your preſent melancholy, ought to have been a cauſe of tranquillity: the wanton has deſerted you, of whoſe continuance no perſon is ſecure; and it is now in your power to enjoy a repoſe that is altogether incompatible with her. Can you then eſteem ſo tranſient a felicity precious? Is the attendance of Fortune ſo extremely dear to you, whoſe ſtay is ſo uncertain, and whoſe removal is followed with ſuch a piercing grief? If it is neither in your power to *detain* her, nor to behold her flight without regret, you ought to look

look upon the preſence of this wanderer, in no other view than as a preſage of ſome approaching calamity: for it is not ſufficient to conſider only the preſent. Wiſdom weighs future events: and the mutability of Fortune, with regard to proſperous and adverſe circumſtances, is ſuch, that we ought neither to be terrified by her threats, nor delighted with her blandiſhments. In fine, when you have ſubmitted your neck to her yoke, you ought to bear with patience and equanimity whatever ſhe thinks proper to inflict. Is it not injuſtice in you, to preſcribe the time of ſtay or removal to a miſtreſs, to whoſe ſovereignty you have voluntarily ſubmitted? and by your impatience, do you not embitter that lot which you cannot poſſibly change? If you leave your veſſel to the winds, you go not as you intend, but where their impulſe drives you. If you cultivate a field, you compenſate years that are barren with thoſe that are fruitful. You have ſubjected yourſelf to the dominion of Fortune; it becomes you, then, as an humble ſubject, to obey her laws. What! would you ſtop the rolling of her wheel? Ah! fooliſh mortal! do you not ſee, that if Fortune were permanent ſhe would ceaſe to exiſt?

Inconſtant as the winds or wat'ry main,
The cruel wanton * ſhifts the ſcenes of fate;
She blaſts the glory of the conqu'ror's reign,
And lifts the captive from his humble ſtate.

* Fortune.

The haughty dame with a malicious joy
Deals woe around, and ne'er repents of ill;
Her ears ſtill deaf to mis'ry's piercing cry,
To ſorrow's tears her eye unpitying ſtill.

Capricious thus ſhe ſports, and boaſts her power,
Her higheſt joy with happineſs to crown
Her vot'ries blind, then ſudden the next hour
To deep deſpair to hurl them headlong down.

Philoſophy expoſtulates with Boethius in the name of Fortune.

But allow me to perſonate Fortune for a few moments, and to expoſtulate with you in her name; in the mean while attend, and you'll acknowledge the juſtice of theſe expoſtulations. —Why, my friend, do you thus daily accuſe me, and pour forth ſuch bitter complaints againſt me? What injury have I done you? Of what poſſeſſions that were really yours, have I deprived you? Contend with me before what judge you pleaſe, upon your title to poſſeſs wealth and honours; and if you can prove that any perſon ever had a fixed property in theſe things, I ſhall moſt willingly grant, what you ſo earneſtly deſire to recover, did formerly belong to you. When nature brought you into the world, from the womb of your mother, I received you naked and in want of every thing; I cheriſhed you, I ſupported you; and what is now the cauſe of your animoſity againſt me? I educated you with too much favour and indulgence; I beſtowed upon you affluence, I ſurrounded you with ſplendor, and heaped upon

upon you all my bleſſings. It is now my will to reſume what I lent: be thankful then for the enjoyment you have had, of what was not your own. You have no cauſe to complain, for you have loſt nothing to which you had a juſt title. Why then do you mourn? I have done you no wrong: riches, honours, and all other things of that nature, are ſubject to me, and in my power: they acknowledge me as their miſtreſs; with me they come; and when I depart, they follow. Boldly may I venture to affirm, that if the things, the want whereof you ſo feelingly lament, had been your own, you could by no means have loſt them. Shall I alone be denied the liberty of exerciſing my rights? Doth not heaven gild the face of nature with the brighteſt days, and obſcure it with the moſt gloomy nights? Do not the ſeaſons adorn the earth with a profuſion of fruits and flowers, and in their progreſs ravage and deform it by rains, and ſnows, and tempeſts? Doth not the ſea now entice us with its placid and flattering aſpect, and anon terrify us with the rage of its vaſt and tumultuous billows? And ſhall I, ſhall I alone, to gratify the inſatiable deſires of men, preſerve a conſtancy oppoſite to my character? Behold my powers! obſerve my perpetual amuſement! I turn my rolling wheel with rapidity; and pleaſe myſelf with exalting what was low, and with bringing down what was high. Mount up upon it then; but upon this condition, that you do

do not complain, if I pull you down whenever my ſportive humour ſhall prompt me to do it. Are you ſtill unacquainted with my frolickſome genius, and with the ſtrange viciſſitudes of which I am the cauſe? Do you not know, that * Croeſus king of Lydia, formerly ſo rich, and ſo formidable to Cyrus, was dragged to the funeral pile, and muſt have periſhed miſerably in the flames, had he not been preſerved by an abundant ſhower from heaven? Do you not remember that † Paulus Æmilius ſhed generous tears over the misfortunes of king Perſeus, whom he had defeated and taken priſoner? And what elſe doth the weeping muſe of Tragedy deplore, but the flouriſhing ſtate of

* Croeſus king of Lydia, ſo remarkable for his riches and proſperity, aſked Solon, the famous Athenian philoſopher and legiſlator, who viſited him at Sardis, who was the happieſt man? Solon named ſeveral; but Croeſus appearing ſurprized that he himſelf was not mentioned as one of them, Solon told him, no man could be ſaid to be happy before death: the truth of which Croeſus afterwards experienced; for being defeated and taken priſoner by Cyrus, he was condemned to be burnt, and while Cyrus's attendants were placing him upon the funeral pile, he cried out, Solon, Solon, Solon! Cyrus aſked why he did this: and when Croeſus informed him of Solon's ſaying, ſtruck with the mutability of Fortune, and inſpired with ſentiments of humanity, Cyrus took compaſſion upon Croeſus, and ordered the pile to be extinguiſhed; which order could not have been executed, unleſs a very plentiful ſhower had at that very time fallen from the heavens. It is farther related, that Cyrus not only ſaved Croeſus's life, but treated him ever afterwards with great humanity and reſpect.

† The inſtability of Fortune was experienced very bitterly by Paulus Æmilius. During the rejoicings of his pompous triumphs over king Perſeus, two of his ſons, very accompliſhed young noblemen, died.

kingdoms

kingdoms overwhelmed by the indiſcriminating ſtrokes of Fortune? Did you not learn whilſt a youth, that at the gates of Jupiter's palace ſtand two large veſſels, one full of bleſſings, the other of woes. What if you have drunk too deep of the firſt veſſel? What if I have not totally forſaken you? Is there not in the mutability of my temper a juſt foundation for your hoping a more proſperous lot?—For all theſe reaſons, you ought not to ſink under affliction. But, as you are placed in a ſtate in common with mankind, you ſhould not deſire to be exempted from the laws of humanity, and to live as you liſt.

Tho' Plenty, from her teeming horn,
Of wealth ſhould pour her copious ſtores,
Profuſe as dew-drops of the morn,
Or ſands upon the briny ſhores;

His heaps ſtill wanting to increaſe,
Rapacious, thankleſs man, complains;
Nor can enjoy his ſoul in peace,
Till power and honours he obtains.

Tho' Heav'n, indulgent to his pray'rs,
Tries to content each fond deſire,
And every boon he aſks confers,
His daring wiſhes ſtill aſpire.

Nought can the impious wretch ſuffice;
He deems his envied fortune poor,
Nor ceaſes yet to vex the ſkies,
But thirſts and wildly gapes for more.

What

What reins can man's deſires controul?
His furious av'rice what reſtrain?
To cool the fever of his ſoul
Heav'n's boundleſs bounty flows in vain.

Unhappy, tho' with plenty bleſt,
The wretch diſtracted with vain fears
Of fancied want;—this cruel peſt
His boſom like a vulture tears.

If Fortune ſhould interrogate you in this manner, you would certainly have nothing to anſwer. But if you have any thing to offer in defence of your complaints, ſpeak out; you have full libetty. —What you have been ſaying, replied I, is indeed very ſpecious, and is adorned with all the ſweet and captivating charms of Rhetorick and Muſic; but alas! ſuch diſcourſes affect no longer than they ſtrike the ear; they cannot reach the heart, and efface the deep impreſſions that miſery there has made. For in that moment when your delightful words ſhall ceaſe to ſound in my ears, my deep-rooted melancholy will recur, and afflict me as much as it did formerly.—I believe ſo, ſaid ſhe; for the arguments I have been uſing, are not deſigned as remedies, but as lenitives only, to allay in ſome meaſure that obſtinate grief which refuſes to be cured; but when I judge it proper, I ſhall adminiſter medicines more effectual, which will reach to the ſeat of your diſtemper.

In

Philoſophy ſhews Boethius that he is not miſerable, but poſſeſſed of much felicity.

In the mean while, that you may not conſider yourſelf the moſt miſerable of men, tell me, have you forgotten your former incomparable felicity? I ſhall not ſpeak of your happineſs, when deprived of your parents, in falling under the care of the chief and moſt reſpectable men of the city; nor of your engaging the affections and eſteem of thoſe worthy perſonages; nor of your being afterwards honoured with their affinity; though there were none who did not then conſider you the happieſt of men, bleſt as you were with the ſplendid alliance of ſuch fathers-in-law, with ſuch an amiable and virtuous conſort, and with ſons of the moſt diſtinguiſhed merit *. I ſhall forbear alſo to mention (for to what purpoſe is it to ſpeak of things that ordinarily happen?) thoſe honourable employments which were denied to age, and conferred upon you in your youth; for I am impatient to recall to your remembrance that ſingular event, which exalted you to the height of human felicity, to the very ſummit of bliſs, if there is ſuch a thing as bliſs below. Is there any ſucceſſion of calamities capable of obliterating the *memory of that day*, when you ſaw your two ſons, inveſted with the dignity of conſuls, iſſue from your

* Boethius's fathers-in-law were Feſtus and Symmachus. Ruſticiana, his ſecond wife, the daughter of Symmachus, was the perſon here mentioned. And Patritius and Hypatius, his ſons by his firſt wife Elpis, who were conſuls about the year 500, are the ſons here ſpoken of.

own houſe in a chariot, attended by a venerable body of ſenators, and followed with the acclamations of a numerous populace? *of that day*, when you beheld them ſeated on high in their curule chairs in the ſenate-houſe, where you diſplayed your genius in delivering a fine panegyrick upon the king *, and deſerved the crown of eloquence? *of that day*, when, to crown the glories of it, you placed yourſelf in the circus betwixt your conſul-ſons †, and diſpenſed to a crowded and joyful aſſembly of the people, a triumphal largeſs, equal to their moſt enlarged expectations? Then it was, while Fortune was careſſing and fondling you as her darling, you, in my opinion, fairly over-reached and got the better of her, by wreſting from her a felicity which never before fell to the ſhare of any private perſon. Have you the aſſurance then to call Fortune to an account? She now begins, I own, to throw an unkind eye upon you; but if you im-

* King Theodorick was then in Rome; and, as it is related in the life of Boethius, anſwered this ſpeech in the moſt obliging terms, and promiſed never to encroach upon any of the privileges of the ſenate.

† The king alſo repaired to the circus, and made a ſpeech to the people, wherein he expreſſed his ſincere deſire of their welfare and proſperity, confirmed the privileges they had enjoyed under the emperors his predeceſſors, and aſſured them of his protection. Boethius, it is ſaid, diſpenſed to the people, upon this occaſion, a triumphal largeſs, *i. e.* ſuch a liberal largeſs as was given upon days of triumph. [The largeſs was a gift in corn and money, ſo much to every man.] It is alſo related, that Theodorick beſtowed at this time a very liberal donative upon the people.

partially weigh your comforts and afflictions, you cannot deny but you are ſtill happy. If you think yourſelf miſerable, becauſe the bleſſings you formerly enjoyed have taken their flight, you ought to conſider, that the evils you ſuffer are alſo tranſitory and upon the wing. Are you ſtill ſo inexperienced, and like a ſtranger newly introduced upon the theatre of the world? Can you ſuppoſe that there is any ſtability in human affairs, when the life of man is expoſed to diſſolution every hour? Though the conſtancy of Fortune is not to be relied upon, yet, if it were, the laſt day of life puts a period to all ſublunary enjoyments. What then is the mighty matter whether you die away from them, or they fly away from you?

* When Phœbus breaks thro' dawning day,
In all his glories bright,
The ſtars diminiſh'd die away
Before his flaming light.

When gentle Zephyr paints the green,
And roſes deck the glade;
An eaſtern blaſt deforms the ſcene,
And all its glories fade.

* This metrum was tranſlated, at my deſire, by the ſame ingenious friend who furniſhed me with a verſion of metrum 2, Book I. It is very finely executed.

Now

Now calmly ſmooth, a ſhining plain
  Old Ocean's ſurface lies,
Now bluſtering ſtorms aſſault the main,
  And raging billows riſe.

If Nature change each circling hour,
  If nought can fix'd abide,
Go,—fondly truſt in tottering pow'r!
  In winged wealth confide!

In this confide, this maxim know
  Thro' Nature's various range,
That all things alter here below,
  And nothing's ſure but change!

O parent of every virtue! replied I, you recall to my memory nothing but what is true, nor can I deny but that the gales of proſperity blew early upon me. But this is the very thing that conſumes me with vexation; for, in every reverſe of fortune, it is the remembrance of former happineſs, that gives the moſt diſtreſſing wound. —But as your preſent ſufferings, ſaid ſhe, ariſe wholly from your falſe opinion of things, they ought not to be imputed to the evil ſtate of your affairs. For if the empty name of a fluctuating happineſs ſtill captivates you; do but recollect what a large portion of the gifts of Fortune is ſtill yours. If I can make it appear, that what you eſteemed as moſt precious in your happy days, is ſtill, by the particular indulgence of Heaven, preſerved inviolable; how can you, enjoying ſuch ineſtimable

ineſtimable bleſſings, complain with juſtice of the injuries of Fortune? * Symmachus, your father-in-law, that ornament of human nature, whoſe welfare you would purchaſe at the expence of life, is ſafe and in health; and that incomparable man, whom Wiſdom and Virtue call their own, is ſo much moved with your misfortunes, that he is regardleſs of himſelf, and the dangers that ſurround him. Your ſpouſe is alſo alive †, a woman equally amiable for the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſitions and the purity of her manners, and, to ſay all in a word, a true reſemblance of her father; ſhe, I would have you to remember, ſtill lives; but what even I muſt allow is an allay to your happineſs, her ſeparation from you diſſolves her in tears, and conſumes her with grief, inſomuch, that ſhe is weary of life, and preſerves it

* Quintus Aurelius Symmachus was prefect of Rome and conſul in the year 522, having his ſon-in-law Boethius, who had been twice conſul before, for his colleague: Symmachus was the firſt man in the ſenate for probity, knowledge, experience, and wiſdom. He was at liberty, when Boethius wrote the Conſolation of Philoſophy in priſon, but he was ſoon afterwards impriſoned at Ravenna, along with pope John I. The pope was thrown into a low dungeon, and famiſhed to death. Symmachus had the fate of his ſon-in-law; he was beheaded in the year 526. See Life of Boethius, p. 23, 26.

† Ruſticiana, daughter of Symmachus. This lady ſurvived her father and huſband a long time. She was alive when Totila, king of the Goths, took Rome in the year 541, and gave the pillage of it to his ſoldiers. The Goths left the inhabitants nothing. Hiſtorians relate, that the principal ladies of that famous city, and among others, the widow of Boethius, were obliged to beg their bread at the doors of the Barbarians.

only for your ſake. Why need I mention your conſular ſons *, who diſplay in their youth the moſt eminent talents, and promiſe to be in every reſpect worthy of their ſire and grandſire?—The principal care of man is to preſerve his life; and if you but know your felicity, you are ſtill happy in the poſſeſſion of bleſſings which all men eſteem dearer than life. Wipe away therefore your tears. Fortune has not wreaked all her malice againſt you; the tempeſt you have ſuffered is inconſiderable, whilſt your anchors hold firm, which afford both preſent conſolation and future hope.—It ſhall be my conſtant prayer, replied I, that theſe anchors may never fail me; for ſo long as they remain, however things go, I ſhall eſcape ſhipwreck. But do you not perceive that I am diveſted of my honours, and plunged in diſgrace?—I ſhould have imagined, ſaid my kind inſtructreſs, that I had made ſome progreſs in your cure, if I did not ſee you repining at your fate; but it grieves me to behold you in poſſeſſion of ſuch comforts, and to hear you lament ſo bitterly that ſomething is wanting to your felicity; for is there any mortal ſo completely happy, that he has not cauſe, in

* Theſe were his ſons Symmachus and Boethius, by Ruſticiana. The appellation Conſular was given to them, not that they were conſuls themſelves, but that they were deſcended from a father who was conſul. Some writers imagine that theſe young noblemen were conſuls in the year 522, and upon that account are here called conſulars: but this is a miſtake; for their father and grandfather were, as is before related, conſuls for that year.

ſome

ſome reſpect, to complain of his condition? The enjoyments of life have this uneaſineſs ever accompanying them, that they neither equal our deſires, nor is our poſſeſſion of them ſecure. One man has riches in abundance, but his birth is obſcure: another is conſpicuous for the nobility of his deſcent, but as he is ſurrounded with indigence, he wiſhes to be unknown: a third is bleſt with both advantages, but laments his living unmarried: this man again is happy in a wife, but bewails the loſs of children, and the neceſſity he is under of leaving his fortune to diſtant heirs: whilſt that other man rejoices that he is the parent of a numerous family, but is ſoon overwhelmed with ſhame, upon account of their profligate behaviour. Hence it is, that there is ſcarce any man who is completely ſatisfied with his condition; for in every ſituation of life there is ſomething diſguſting, which a perſon does not feel till he has had experience of it, but which he ſoon diſcovers upon a trial. Add to this, that a man flowing in proſperity has a moſt delicate ſenſibility *; and that, unleſs all things ſucceed to

* Proſperity, ſays Doctor Blair, in his very accurate and elegant ſermons, vol. I. p. 186, debilitates inſtead of ſtrengthening the mind. Its moſt common effect is, to create an extreme ſenſibility to the ſlighteſt wound. It foments impatient deſires, and raiſes expectations which no ſucceſs can ſatisfy. It foſters a falſe delicacy, which ſickens in the midſt of indulgence. By repeated gratification, it blunts the feelings of men to what is pleaſing, and leaves them unhappily acute to whatever is uneaſy. Hence, the gale which another would

his wiſh, as he is unacquainted with adverſity, he is overturned by the ſmalleſt reverſe of fortune; the ſlighteſt accident being ſufficient to damp his enjoyments, and involve him in miſery. Do not you perceive that numbers of the human race would think themſelves almoſt exalted to heaven, were they but poſſeſſed of a ſmall portion of the wrecks of your fortune? This place, which you call a baniſhment, is to its inhabitants their beloved country. Nothing is the cauſe of miſery, but what is conſidered as ſuch; and every lot is happy to a perſon who bears it with tranquillity. Who, I pray you, is ſo bleſt, but, if he gives reins to impatience, deſires to change his condition? With what bitter ingredients is human happineſs allayed! for when it is ſuch as men are delighted with, it cannot be retained, but takes its flight at pleaſure. Hence therefore appears the uncomfortable nature of all worldly proſperity; ſince with regard to thoſe that enjoy it with equanimity, it has no permanency; and with reſpect to a perſon of delicate feelings, it is always defective and incompleat. Why, therefore, O mortals! do ye ſearch abroad for happineſs? when it is only to be found at home in your own breaſts. You are the dupes of error and of ignorance. I will ſhew you in a few words in

would ſcarcely feel, is to the proſperous a rude tempeſt. Hence, the roſe-leaf doubled below them on the couch, as is told of the effeminate Sybarite, breaks their reſt.

what

what the chief happineſs conſiſts.—Is there any thing more precious to you than yourſelf? Nothing, you will ſay. Aſſume then the government of yourſelf, and you will poſſeſs what you can never loſe, and what Fortune cannot take from you.

Happineſs doth not conſiſt in the gifts of Fortune.

But to be fully convinced that happineſs conſiſts not in things which are in the power of Fortune, attend to the following reaſoning:—If happineſs is the chief good of a reaſonable being, that cannot be his chief good, which is in its nature fluctuating, and of which he may be deprived; for there is ſome good more excellent than this tranſitory felicity, namely, what is permanent, and which cannot be taken away: it is therefore evident, that Fortune, the moſt variable thing in the world, cannot beſtow the ſovereign good upon mankind. Beſides, whoever is captivated with the favours of the capricious dame, either knows, or does not know her inconſtancy. If he does not know it, what happineſs can a perſon enjoy, who is immerſed in the groſſeſt ignorance? If he knows it, he muſt be afraid of loſing her gifts, as he is ſure they may be loſt; and the fear of this will keep him in conſtant terror, and bereave him of repoſe. But perhaps he may think the favours of Fortune deſpicable, and if he ſhould be deprived of them, unworthy of his concern: if this is the caſe, it muſt be a very inconſiderable good, the loſs whereof can be ſupported without

regret. But as I am ſatisfied that you are convinced of the ſoul's immortality, by a number of inconteſtable proofs; and ſince it is evident that the felicity of the body ends with life *, it unqueſtionably follows, that when men loſe this felicity, they muſt be plunged in miſery. Nevertheleſs, as we know that many of the human race have ſought the enjoyment of happineſs, not only by death, but by ſufferings and torments; how can this preſent life make men happy, ſince, when finiſhed, it does not make them miſerable?

Would you a manſion firm and ſure
Prepare, where you may reſt ſecure,
Scorning each blaſt that idly raves,
Deſpiſing Neptune's ſwelling waves;
Build not upon the mountain's brow,
Tho' every proſpect charms below;
Nor, pleas'd to hear old Ocean roar,
Fix not too near the ſandy ſhore.—
On high,—your airy fabrick plac'd,
By every rattling ſtorm's defac'd;
And if you found on treach'rous ſand,
Your ſuperſtructure ſhall not ſtand.
Convenience to delight prefer;
In ſearch of pleaſure oft we err.
Go—then in ſome calm vale's retreat,
Firm on a rock erect your ſeat;

* If the happineſs of man conſiſts only in the felicity of the body, and a period is put to this felicity by death; man, if he continues afterwards to exiſt, muſt neceſſarily be miſerable.

Th'

Th' impetuous winds that vex the main,
And ravage hills,—your ſhelter'd ſcene
Annoy not;—there, compos'd to eaſe,
Content becalms your happy days,
While all the noiſe the tempeſts keep,
Serves but to ſooth your balmy ſleep.

But as I perceive, continued ſhe, that the lenitive and palliating reaſonings I have employed, have begun to inſinuate themſelves into your heart, I think you are now prepared to receive comfort from arguments more powerful and effectual; let me therefore beg your attention:—Were the gifts of Fortune not even ſo fading and momentary as they are, what is there in them, I pray you, to conſtitute your happineſs? Do they contain any thing, when cloſely examined, but what ought to render them deſpicable in your ſight? Are riches precious in themſelves, or only in the eſtimation of men? Which is moſt precious in them? the quantity or the quality? But does not a man acquire more luſtre by ſpending than by hoarding them? as avarice is always odious, and liberality praiſe-worthy: and if that which is transferred to another, cannot remain in our hands, then certainly money never can be precious and eſtimable, but when, by ſpending it, we transfer it to others, and it ceaſes to be ours. But if all the money in the world were accumulated into the coffers of one man, would not every one elſe be

Happineſs not to be found in riches.

in want of it? The ſound of a voice, without ſuffering any alteration, fills the ears of many at the ſame time; but this is not the caſe with riches, which cannot be diſperſed among multitudes without being diminiſhed, and rendering indigent thoſe to whom it formerly belonged. O riches! how limited and deficient is your boaſted value! You cannot be enjoyed by many at the ſame time, nor can you be heaped up by one without impoveriſhing others. But ſay, doth the ſplendor of jewels dazzle your eyes? If there is any thing valuable in their luſtre, it is the property of the ſtones themſelves, and not of their admirers: I am therefore greatly ſurprized that mankind are ſo very much captivated with them. For what can there be in any thing deſtitute of motion, life, and reaſon, that can juſtly attract the regard of creatures endowed with life and reaſon? Precious ſtones are indeed the workmanſhip of the Creator, and amid the variety of his works they are deſervedly diſtinguiſhed for their beauty; but as their beauty is infinitely below the excellence of your nature, they are by no means worthy of your ſupreme admiration and deſire.—Does not the proſpect of a fine country delight you? Why ſhould it not? for it is really a beautiful part of a moſt beautiful whole. Hence we contemplate with pleaſure, a calm and ſerene ſea; hence we admire the heavens, the ſtars, the ſun and the moon.—But have you any property

in

in theſe magnificent exiſtences? Have you the preſumption to glorify yourſelf in their ſplendor? Do the vernal flowers adorn you with their variety? or, doth your fruitfulneſs burſt forth in the profuſion of ſummer fruits? Why do you ſuffer yourſelf to be hurried away by empty deluſions? Why do you place your happineſs in things external? as Fortune can never make thoſe enjoyments yours, where, in the nature of things, you have no property.—The fruits of the earth are undoubtedly deſigned for the ſupport of animals: but if you want only to ſupply the neceſſities of nature, the affluence which Fortune beſtows will be uſeleſs; for Nature contents herſelf with little, and if you heap upon her more than ſhe demands, the ſuperfluity will be both diſagreeable and hurtful.—Again, do you imagine it adds any thing to a man's worth to ſhine in magnificent robes? If there are in theſe any thing to be admired, it is only the beauty of the ſtuff, or the ingenuity of the workman.—Once more—Can you think it a happineſs to be followed by a numerous train of domeſtics? They are a ſet of profligates, they are dangerous furniture in a houſe, and extremely hurtful to the maſter: but if they are men of worth, what title have you to reckon the probity of others a part of your riches?

Upon the whole, then, it plainly appears, that none of the enjoyments which you conſidered as your own, did ever properly belong to you: but if

if there is no intrinſic worth in theſe matters to render them deſirable, why do you rejoice in the poſſeſſion of them, or afflict yourſelf for their loſs? If they derive a beauty from nature, what relation has that to you? For in that caſe, from their own beauty, they would be equally agreeable whether they were yours or not. It is not, therefore, becauſe they are a part of your property, that they are precious; it is only becauſe they appeared precious to you, that you deſired to number them among your poſſeſſions.—Why then are you ſo clamorous in your demands upon Fortune? You want, you ſay, to drive away indigence by abundance; but the very reverſe of this happens, for great care and much aſſiſtance is requiſite to preſerve a variety of valuable goods: and it is a certain truth, that none have a greater number of wants than thoſe who have the largeſt poſſeſſions; whilſt, on the contrary, none are leſs indigent than ſuch as meaſure their abundance by the neceſſities of nature, and not by the ſuperfluity of their deſires. Is there then no real happineſs to be found within your breaſt, which you may juſtly call your own, that you are obliged to ſearch for it in things foreign and external? How ſtrangely is the order of nature inverted, that a being, who from the faculty of reaſon reſembles the Divinity, ſhould, in his own eſtimation, have no other worth or excellence but what he derives from the poſſeſſion of inanimate objects!—Infe-

rior

rior animals are content with their endowments; you only, whom intelligence renders like to the Deity, vainly ſeek to adorn your exalted nature with things that are infinitely below you, not perceiving by ſuch a behaviour, how much you diſhonour your Creator. His will it was, that mankind ſhould excel all terreſtrial creatures; but ſo greatly do you debaſe your dignity, that you degrade yourſelves below the moſt contemptible of them: for if the glittering vanities, reckoned precious by men, are eſteemed of more value than the perſons to whom they belong; when therefore you place your happineſs upon ſuch deſpicable trifles, do you not thereby acknowledge yourſelf of leſs worth than theſe trifles? and well do you merit to be ſo eſteemed. Such, I would have you to remember, is the nature of man, that he then only excels all other beings, when he knows himſelf; but when he ceaſes to do this, he ſinks below beaſts: for ignorance of themſelves is natural to brutes, but in men it is unnatural and criminal. How great then, and how apparent is your miſtake, in believing that any thing which is ſo foreign to your nature, can be an ornament to it? I again aſſure you, that this cannot be true; for if a thing appears beautiful from its external artificial embelliſhments, we admire and commend thoſe embelliſhments alone, whilſt we ſtill look upon the thing itſelf as de-

formed or inſignificant *. Moreover, I deny that to be a good, which is hurtful to him that poſſeſſes it. Is not this true? Undoubtedly, you will anſwer me. But riches are often hurtful to thoſe who have acquired them; for every wicked man is deſirous of another's wealth, and thinks that he alone ought to engroſs all the gold and jewels in the world. You, therefore, who ſo much dread the inſtruments of aſſaſſination, if you had entered upon the ſtage of life, as a poor way-faring man, you might have careleſly purſued your journey, and boldly ſung in the face of robbers. Juſtly therefore may I exclaim, O the tranſcendent felicity of riches! No ſooner have you acquired them, but you ceaſe to be ſecure, and bid farewel to tranquillity!

Thrice happy they in days of old
Who liv'd—it was an age of gold;
Content, with what the bounteous ſoil
Beſtow'd abundant, without toil.
Ere baneful luxury began
To mix the poiſon'd cup of man,

* As when you ſee a viper, or an aſp, or a ſcorpion, in an ivory or gold box, you do not love it, or think it happy, on account of the magnificence of the materials in which it is enclоſed; but ſhun and deteſt it, becauſe it is of a pernicious nature: ſo likewiſe, when you ſee vice lodged in the midſt of wealth, and the ſwelling pride of fortune, be not ſtruck with the ſplendor of the materials with which it is ſurrounded, but deſpiſe the baſe alloy of its manners.

Epictetus, Fragment 17. Mrs. Carter's tranſlation.

Ripe

Ripe fruits and herbs his wholeſome food
Supplied,—nor thirſted he for blood;—
On hills ſecurely fed the flocks,
Safe in the paſtures graz'd the ox.—
The painful bee's ambroſial dew,
That healthful precious balm he knew:
But knew not, from the juicy vine,
To draw the dangerous charms of wine.
To ſhine in ſplendid dreſs admir'd,
He, unambitious, ne'er aſpir'd;
The Tyrian dyes were unreveal'd,
The diamond's luſtre lay conceal'd.
Serenely pleaſant paſs'd his days,
His wants were few,—and ſerv'd with eaſe:
The flow'ry lawn—his fragrant bed,
The zeyhyrs bland—his ſlumbers fed,
The purling ſtream's tranſlucent wave
Delightful beverage to him gave;
The ſhadowy pine a cool retreat
Afforded, from the noon-tide heat.
Fir'd with inſatiate thirſt of gain,
No bold advent'rers plow'd the main,
And madly tempted untried ſhores,
By commerce to encreaſe their ſtores.
The martial trumpet's loud alarms
Rous'd not theſe ſons of peace to arms;
Unſkill'd in war's deteſted trade,
In purple gore the ſhining blade
They dyed not, nor the thirſty plain
Strow'd with the wounded and the ſlain.

For

For what could ſtimulate their rage
In impious battles to engage,
When death, or many a gaping wound,
Was all the meed that valour crown'd?
O could we ſee thoſe golden times,
So guiltleſs, ſo averſe from crimes,
Return, and bleſs the earth again!—
But that fond wiſh, alas, how vain!
Man's thirſt of wealth what can aſſuage?
Not Etna's fires more fiercely rage.—
Curs'd be the wretch who op'd the mine,
And gave the flaming gold to ſhine;
Th' unnumber'd ills that vex the earth,
To that dire miſchief owe their birth.

Happineſs not to be found in power and honours.

Why ſhould I diſcourſe of power and of honours, which, though you are ignorant of true honour and of real power, you extol to the ſkies? When theſe favours of Fortune fall to the ſhare of an abandon'd profligate, what flaming eruptions of Etna, what impetuous deluge did ever produce greater calamities? No doubt you have heard that your anceſtors formed a deſign to aboliſh the conſular government (tho' with the conſulſhip their liberty commenced), on account of the inſolence of theſe magiſtrates; as they formerly ſuppreſſed the title and office of king, becauſe of the tyranny of their monarchs. But if ſometimes, though ſeldom, it happens, that honours are conferred upon men of worth; is there any thing eſtimable

eſtimable in them, but the probity of the perſons inveſted with them? Hence it is, that virtue is not embelliſhed by dignities, but on the contrary, dignities derive all their luſtre from virtue. But in what reſpects, I pray you, is power ſo excellent and ſo deſirable? Do but conſider, O ye weak and deſpicable animals! what they are, over whom you appear to exerciſe authority, and what you are, who thus ſeem to govern? If you obſerved a mouſe aſſuming command over her equals, would not you be ready to burſt with laughter? But what is there in nature ſo weak as the human frame? The bite of an inſect, the moſt inconſiderable reptile inſinuating itſelf into the human pores, may be the cauſe of death. But how can any man obtain dominion over another, unleſs it be over his body, or what is inferior to his body, I mean, his poſſeſſions? Can you ever command a free-born ſoul? Can you ever diſturb the tranquillity of a mind collected in itſelf, and reſolutely exerting its powers? An imperious prince imagining he might, by tortures, extort a confeſſion of his accomplices in a conſpiracy, from a perſon of determined ſpirit *, the undaunted man bit off his tongue, and ſpit it in the face of his enraged enemy: thus did he at once diſappoint the views of the tyrant, and render the cruelties prepared for him,

* The perſon here ſpoken of was probably Zeno, inventor of logick, mentioned in a former note; and the tyrant alluded to, Nearchus of Elea, againſt whom Zeno had formed a conſpiracy.

matter

matter of triumph to his own heroic virtue. Beſides, what is it that one man can do to another, which may not be retaliated upon the aggreſſor? * Buſiris, who we are told was wont to kill his gueſts, was himſelf ſlaughtered by Hercules his gueſt. Regulus † put in chains many priſoners of war, whom he took from the Carthaginians; but he was ſoon after obliged to ſubmit to the chains of his victorious enemies. Is the power then of that man, do you think, of any importance, who dares not inflict what he intends upon another, leſt his intended ſeverities may be requited upon himſelf? Beſides, I would have you to reflect, that if there were any thing really and intrinſically good in power and honours, they could never devolve upon the wicked; for an union of things that are oppoſite, is repugnant to nature. But as we frequently ſee the worſt men obtaining the higheſt honours; it is evident that honours are not in themſelves good, otherwiſe they would not fall to the ſhare of the unworthy. The ſame holds true, with regard to all the gifts of Fortune, which are commonly ſhowered down in profuſion upon the leaſt deſerving. We ought here alſo to conſider, that as none doubts of the

* Buſiris, king of Egypt, a cruel tyrant, is ſaid to have been the ſon of Neptune and of Lybia. He uſed to ſacrifice ſtrangers to Jupiter; but whilſt he was preparing to put Hercules to death in this manner, Hercules overcame him, and ſacrificed both him and his ſon to Jupiter upon the ſame altar.

† The hiſtory of Regulus, the famous Roman conſul, is univerſally known.

ſtrength

ſtrength of a man, who has given inſtances of his ſtrength, nor of his ſwiftneſs who runs well; in like manner it is admitted that the knowledge of muſic makes a muſician, of medicine a phyſician, and of rhetorick a rhetorician. For the nature of a thing conſiſts in doing what is peculiar to itſelf, in not mixing its effects with things of oppoſite qualities, and in voluntarily repelling what is repugnant or hurtful to it. Now, we never ſee riches ſatisfy the reſtleſs cravings of avarice, nor power render maſter of himſelf the man whoſe opprobrious vices keep him bound in indiſſoluble chains; neither do we perceive that when honours are conferred on the unworthy, they are thereby rendered men of worth: on the contrary, dignities ſerve only to betray them, and to expoſe their want of merit. But for what reaſon does all this happen? 'Tis becauſe you take a pleaſure in giving falſe names to things; names contrary to their natures, and inconſiſtent with their effects: thus you dignify riches, power, and honours with names they have no title to. In fine, we may ſay the ſame of all the favours of Fortune: we may truly conclude, that ſhe has nothing to beſtow that is really deſirable, nothing that is naturally good; that ſhe is not inſeparably attached to men of merit, and that ſhe does not render virtuous thoſe to whom ſhe adheres.

Nero, that dreaded monſter's crimes
Shall live abhorr'd till lateſt times;
Who, when he burn'd imperial Rome,
In ſportive ſtrains bewail'd her doom:
Who madly rioted in blood
Of conſcript fathers wiſe and good;
And ſmote with unrelenting rage
* His brother, darling of the age.
Dreadful to tell,—but ah too true!
His impious hands his mother ſlew;
Pale at his feet, the ſavage bear
Her corſe beheld without a tear;
Her poliſhed frame he curious ſpied,
And every fine proportion eyed;
And ſaid with a diſdainful air,
He never thought her half ſo fair.
Yet with unlimited command
This parricide ruled every land,
Which Sol, reſplendent God of day,
Rejoices with enlivening ray,
Bright iſſuing from the purple eaſt,
Serene deſcending in the weſt:
The frozen regions of the pole
Were bended too, to his control:
Beneath the line the ſwarthy train
Bewail'd the horrors of his reign.——

* Boethius means Britannicus. Nero was Britannicus's brother only by adoption. The tyrant was the ſon of Domitian and Agrippina, and was adopted by Claudius after he married Agrippina. Britannicus was the ſon of Claudius by Meſſalina. Nero put Britannicus to death by poiſon when he was ſixteen years of age.

But

But what did this extent of power?
Did it beſtow one tranquil hour?
Tam'd it ferocious Nero's mind?
Or taught—the monſter to be kind?
Hapleſs their fate,—doom'd to obey
A fierce deſpotick tyrant's ſway;
Whoſe pow'r unbounded arms his will
To execute his ſchemes of ill.—

Happineſs not to be found in glory and in fame.

I here interpoſed, and ſaid, My dear miſtreſs, you are thoroughly ſenſible that a paſſion for thoſe fluctuating things never had dominion over me. I wiſhed indeed for ſome ſhare in publick concerns to exerciſe my virtue, leſt it ſhould grow feeble by inactivity, and die away uncelebrated.—I confeſs, replied ſhe, that there is one thing which may captivate ſouls that are naturally great, but by a habitude of virtue, not arrived to the height of perfection, and that is, a love of glory, and the fame of performing illuſtrious ſervices to their country. But conſider with me in the following detail, how limited this glory is! how frivolous and how contemptible! You have learned from aſtronomy, that this globe of earth is but as a point, in reſpect to the vaſt extent of the heavens; that is, the immenſity of the celeſtial ſphere is ſuch, that ours, when compared with it, is as nothing, and vaniſhes. You know likewiſe from the proofs that Ptolemy adduces, there is only one fourth part of this earth, which is of

itſelf ſo ſmall a portion of the univerſe, inhabited by creatures known to us. If from this fourth you deduct the ſpace occupied by the ſeas and lakes, and the vaſt ſandy regions which extreme heat and want of water render uninhabitable, there remains but a very ſmall proportion of the terreſtrial ſphere for the habitation of men. Encloſed then and locked up as you are, in an unperceiveable point of a point, do you think of nothing, but of blazing far and wide your name and reputation? What can there be great or pompous in a glory circumſcribed in ſo narrow a circuit? To this let me add, that even in this contracted circuit, there is a great variety of nations differing from one another in their languages, manners and cuſtoms, to whom, whether from the difficulty of travelling, or the diverſity of tongues, or the want of commerce, the fame not only of particular perſons, but even of great cities, cannot extend. In Cicero's time, as he tells us ſomewhere in his works, the renown of Rome herſelf, which ſhe imagined was diffuſed every where, did not reach beyond Mount Caucaſus, though the republick was then in he glory, and had rendered herſelf formidable to the Parthians, and to all the nations in their neighbourhood. Do you not hence diſcover, how ſtrait and circumſcribed that glory neceſſarily is, which you take ſuch mighty pains to propagate? Shall the praiſes of a Roman citizen, do you think, reſound

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in countries, where the name even of Rome herſelf was never heard? Do you not perceive that the manners and cuſtoms of different nations widely vary; inſomuch, that what is thought to deſerve praiſe in one country, is in another deemed worthy of puniſhment? For this reaſon, it is not the intereſt of a man who thirſts after glory, to propagate his reputation every where. He ought to reſt ſatisfied with the renown which he has acquired among his countrymen, and ſhould not ſtrive to diffuſe this dazzling immortality of fame, ſo flattering to his pride, any further. But of how many perſonages, illuſtrious in their times, have the memorials been loſt, for want or by the forgetfulneſs of writers *? But do writings preſerve the remembrance of men for ever? Are not

* Thus Horace, Ode 9. Book 4.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; ſed omnes illacrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longa
Nocte carent quia vate ſacro.
Paulum ſepultæ diſtat inertiæ
Celata virtus.

Before great Agamemnon reign'd,
Reign'd kings as great as he, and brave,
Whoſe huge ambition's now contain'd
In the ſmall compaſs of a grave:
In endleſs night they ſleep, unwept, unknown;
No Bard had they to make all time their own.
In earth if it forgotten lies,
What is the valour of the brave?
What difference, when the coward dies,
And ſinks in ſilence to his grave? FRANCIS.

the beſt compoſitions, along with the names of their authors, obliterated by time, and wrapt in oblivion? But you ſuppoſe, perhaps, you ſhall ſecure to yourſelves immortality, if you can tranſmit your names to future ages. But if you contemplate the unbounded ocean of eternity, you will have no reaſon to rejoice in this ſuppoſition. For if the lapſe of an inſtant is compared with that of ten thouſand years, as the extent of both is definite, there is a proportion betwixt them, though a very ſmall one; but this ſame number of years, multiplied by whatever ſum you pleaſe, vaniſhes, when compared with the infinite extent of eternal duration. For there can be no proportion betwixt infinite and finite, though there is always a relation, greater or leſs, betwixt finite and finite. Hence it is, that if the longeſt duration of renown in future ages is eſtimated with an unlimited eternity, there is not even a ſmall proportion betwixt them; there is abſolutely none.—But you, O deluded mortals! do good from no other view than to exalt your name and to receive popular applauſe. Inſenſible to the pleaſures reſulting from a good conſcience and from the practice of virtue, you ſeek no other reward but the inſignificant praiſes of a giddy multitude.—This ſilly vanity was once thus agreeably rallied: A ſolemn fellow who had aſſumed the name of a Philoſopher, not from the love of virtue, but of vain-glory, was attacked with the bittereſt

bitterest reproaches by a man of humour, and told, that he had it now in his power to show that he was truly the Philosopher he professed himself to be, by bearing with patience the abuse heaped upon him. The conceited sophist assuming calmness for a while, seemed to despise all the insults with which he was provoked. But at length he burst forth, and exclaimed, You must surely now confess that I am a Philosopher! Not at all, replied the rallier slily; I might indeed have believed you one, if you had continued to hold your peace.

But after all, of what importance is it to illustrious men, (for it is of such only that I speak,) of what importance is it, I say, to them who pursue glory by a course of meritorious actions, that their names resound with applause, after their bodies are resolved into dust? For if men die entirely, which our principles forbid us to believe *,

* It must be acknowledged that the most antient and celebrated among the Greek Philosophers believed in the immortality of the soul; of which number were Thales the founder of the Ionian sect, and his follower Anaxagoras; the famous Pythagoras, the founder of the Italian school; Socrates, the wisest and most virtuous of all the antient Philosophers, and Plato his disciple, the founder of the Old Academy. We may here add, that all the heathens, who believed in the Elysian Fields, and a Tartarus, must have held the immortality of the soul. Epicurus, however, and many other celebrated Philosophers of antiquity, were not of this opinion; believing the soul was material, and died with the body. With regard to the Stoicks, they speak very honourably of the soul of man, as a portion of the essence of the Deity. And Lactantius relates, that Zeno, the founder of the Stoick sect, says,

glory is only an imaginary thing; as the perſon to whom it was appropriated no more exiſts. But if, on the other hand, the ſoul is immortal, the righteous ſpirit, conſcious that ſhe is now at liberty, and diſengaged from her bounds of clay, takes her flight to the upper regions, and looks down with contempt upon every object below; and happy in the enjoyments of heaven, rejoices that ſhe is exempted from all ſublunary concerns.

Go thou, who fondly dream'ſt that fame
Is ſovereign good;—deluded man!
Go, view heav'n's wide-extended frame,
Compar'd with earth's contracted ſpan:
Beholding fame thus to a point confin'd,
Its fancied worth will ceaſe to charm thy mind.

With titles grac'd, with laurels crown'd,
By every tongue applauded, ſay,
Will *theſe* enlarge life's ſtated round?
Will *theſe* reſiſtleſs fate delay?
Relentleſs death has no diſtinction made
'Twixt high and low, the ſceptre and the ſpade.

ſays, in the ſhades below the habitations of the pious are ſeparated from thoſe of the wicked; the former dwelling in peaceful and delightful regions, while the latter are ſuffering in dark and loathſome priſons. But after all, it muſt be owned, as Mrs. Carter remarks, that there is nothing but confuſion, and a melancholy uncertainty, to be met with in the writings of the Stoicks upon this ſubject.

Where's

Where's now Fabricius good and brave?
Where Brutus *, virtuous in extreme?
Where Cato, who diſdain'd a ſlave?
Have they not paſs'd the Stygian ſtream?
Their memory lives, dear to the good and wiſe,
Their awful forms no longer ſtrike our eyes.

Ye err,—who vainly truſt your name
Shall flouriſh green, and never fade;
Time's withering hand ſhall blaſt your fame,
And wrap it in oblivion's ſhade:
Your mortal frame, and priz'd memorial too,
(Victorious twice,) ſhall conqu'ring Death ſubdue.

Adverſe Fortune often profitable.

But do not however believe, continued ſhe, that I am an implacable enemy to Fortune, and delight to wage perpetual war with her. I grant you, that this inconſtant dame ſometimes deſerves well of mankind; I mean when ſhe diſcovers herſelf to them; when ſhe unveils her countenance and diſplays her manners. Perhaps you do not underſtand me. What I want to teach you is indeed ſo ſurpriſing, that I am at a loſs to find words to expreſs myſelf. I ſay that adverſe Fortune is in reality more beneficial to mankind than proſperous Fortune. The latter, while ſhe fondly throws forth her careſſes, and would fain perſuade us that happineſs reſides only with her, is quite the reverſe of what ſhe appears: the former appears what ſhe really is, diſplaying by her viciſſitudes

* The firſt Brutus.

her natural inconſtancy. The one deceives; the other inſtructs. This, by a fallacious ſhew of good, deludes and enſlaves the mind; that, by diſcovering the fluctuating nature of human happineſs, enlarges and reſtores it to its native freedom. The one we behold blown up with vanity, light, wavering, and incapable of reflection; whilſt the aſpect of the other is humble, patient, and wiſe with her experience in the ſchool of affliction. In fine, proſperous Fortune by her blandiſhments leads men aſtray from the true good; but on the other hand, adverſe Fortune by her rigours teaches them wherein real happineſs conſiſts, and conducts them to it. Let me now aſk you this one queſtion: Is it an inconſiderable ſervice that this latter has done you, vexatious and odious as you think her, in putting the fidelity of your friends to a trial? She has ſeparated the true from the falſe: by her departure ſhe has carried off hers, and left yours. At what price would not you have purchaſed ſuch a ſervice, when you were at the height of your imaginary felicity! Forbear then to deplore the wealth you have loſt, as you have found riches of infinitely greater value,—*your friends.*

Go,—thro' the works of Nature range,
Admire her in each various change.
See elements that mutual jar,
Reſtrain'd by Concord ceaſe to war:

See Phœbus faithful to the day,
Purſue thro' heav'n his radiant way,
And ſetting in the weſtern main,
Yield to the moon's more ſober reign.
Behold the empreſs of the night
Gladdening the earth with ſofter light:
The ſtars ſee glittering round her throne,
By dewy Heſperus led on,
Revolving each their ſeveral rounds,
Nor treſpaſſing on others bounds.
His proud tempeſtuous billows chain'd,
See Ocean within bounds conſtrain'd;
Not daring to invade the plain,
Nor drown the labours of the ſwain!
Theſe wonders all we owe to Love,
Who rules below, and rules above:
'Tis hence, this beauteous order ſprings
Thro' all th' infinitude of things;
Diſſolv'd this ſtrong coercive chain,
Confuſion uncontrol'd would reign;
Atoms, that mingle and unite
In concord ſweet, would jar and fight,
And ruin by inteſtine war
This frame of things, ſo wond'rous fair.
Hail, Love benevolent! the cauſe
Of order, government and laws:
By Love man's ſavage heart was tam'd,
By Love ſocieties were fram'd;
Hence ſtates in compact firm were bound,
And law dealt equal juſtice round:

Hence

Hence ſprung th' endearing nuptial tie,
Pure fountain of perpetual joy;
Hence Friendſhip's gentler pleaſures flow,
Beſt ſource of bliſs, beſt balm of woe.
Ah!—did that pure celeſtial Love
That actuates and rules above,
Govern ſupreme the human breaſt,
Mortals would then be truly bleſt!

BOOK III.

Philoſophy teaches Boethius that all men are in ſearch of happineſs, or the ſovereign good.——That ſome falſely place it in the acquiſition of riches——Others in the obtaining of power and honours——Others in the glory of great atchievements,—or in nobility of birth,—or in the pleaſures of the body.——Philoſophy clearly demonſtrates that the ſovereign good is not to be found in any of theſe externals.——She afterwards explains the true characteriſticks of this happineſs.——She ſhews that it reſides in the Deity, who is the ſovereign and the only good,—and that God governs the univerſe by his goodneſs, as a helm or rudder.

PHILOSOPHY now ended her ſong; the harmony of which had ſo charmed my ears, that for ſome time I thought her ſtill ſpeaking, and remained attentive. But after a ſhort

* The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he a while
Thought him ſtill ſpeaking, ſtill ſtood fixed to hear;
Then, as new wak'd, thus gratefully replied.
MILTON.

pauſe,

pauſe, I thus began:—O thou ſovereign comforter of dejected minds! what vigour haſt thou infuſed into me by the powerful energy of thy diſcourſe, and the melody of thy numbers! ſo that I now almoſt think myſelf equal to Fortune, and able to withſtand her blows. So far am I therefore from having an averſion to the powerful remedies you formerly mentioned, that I earneſtly deſire you will adminiſter them.—When I ſaw you liſten to me, replied ſhe, with ſo fixed an attention, I expected the diſpoſition of your mind would be ſuch as you ſay it is: to ſpeak the truth, I inſpired you with this diſpoſition. The conſolations that I am now to apply are of the nature of thoſe medicines that are bitter in the mouth, but grateful and ſtrengthening to the ſtomach. But as you ſay you are moſt deſirous to hear them; with what ardour would you be fired, if you knew where I am about to conduct you!—Whither is that, I pray you?—To that genuine Felicity, replied ſhe, of whoſe features you have at preſent a very imperfect view, as if it were in a dream; but whoſe ſupreme beauty and excellence, occupied as you are in the contemplation of deceitful phantoms, you cannot now perceive.—I entreat you then, without delay, ſaid I, to ſhew me this true Felicity.—Induced by my regard to you, replied ſhe, I ſhall comply moſt willingly with your requeſt; but I will firſt give you a deſcription of falſe Happineſs, with whom you

you are better acquainted than with the true; and after we have ſurveyed that deceitful dame, I ſhall turn your eyes upon her oppoſite, and charm you with a compleat view of the true Felicity.

Rich Ceres will reward the ſwain
With copious ſtores of golden grain,
Who labours with unwearied toil
His field, and clears from weeds the ſoil,

If the offended palate rues
The flavour of ſome bitter juice,
The bee's ſweet labour,—ſweet before,
Pleaſes and reliſhes ſtill more.

When ſhow'ry ſouthern blaſts abſtain
To cloud the ſkies and vex the main,
The ſtars ſhine forth in luſtre bright,
And heav'n's wide concave charms the ſight.

When firſt the ſmiling eaſtern dawn
Has ſtreak'd with roſy light the lawn,
Then Phœbus mounts his chariot gay,
And flaſhes round refulgent day.

Awake then, and attentive view
The bliſs fallacious men purſue;
Their boaſted idols, mark how vain!—
Diſſolving thus the fancied chain
That captivates your free-born mind,
The true, the ſovereign good you'll find.

Then

All men in ſearch of happineſs or the ſovereign good.

Then with a ſerious air, and ſeeming to recollect herſelf, and to rouſe up every faculty of her mind, ſhe thus continued her diſcourſe.—All the cares, all the deſires of mankind terminate in happineſs*, which, though they purſue by a variety of different roads, is ſtill the ultimate end of their endeavours. But true happineſs is a good, which, after it is obtained, there is nothing more to be deſired. It is indeed the ſupreme good, a good that contains in it all others; to which if any thing were wanting, it could not be the bleſſing we ſpeak of; as there would be ſomething beſides itſelf, ſome extraneous or foreign advantage ſtill to be wiſhed. Happineſs then is manifeſtly that ſtate of perfection, wherein every good centers and is accumulated; and is the object, as we juſt now obſerved, which all the human race ſtrive to poſſeſs. For there is implanted in the hearts of all men a propenſity to the true good; though error miſleads them, and engages them in the purſuit of joys that are falſe and deluſive.—Some, imagining that the ſupreme good conſiſts in being ſheltered from wants, exert all their induſtry in heaping up a ſuperabundance of wealth.

* Epictetus, in Arrian, ſays this is the univerſal motive of action. "Apparent good (by which he means happineſs) at firſt ſight attracts, and evil repels: nor will the ſoul any more reject an "evident appearance of good, than Cæſar's coin. Hence depends "every movement both of God and man; and hence good is preferred "to every obligation, however dear." Mrs. Carter's Tranſlation of Arrian, B. III. ſ. 1. 2.

Others,

Others, ſuppoſing that this good lies in attracting attention and reſpect, are inceſſant in their endeavours to acquire honourable employments, that they may appear venerable in the eyes of their fellow-citizens. There are ſome, again, who place the ſupreme good in ſupreme power; and are therefore inflamed with a deſire either to rule themſelves, or to become the favourites of thoſe who rule. Others there are, who eſteem a wide reſounding fame the height of happineſs; and ſuch exert all their efforts to render their names illuſtrious, either by war, or by promoting the arts of peace, and the internal felicity of countries: whilſt there are many who, as they eſtimate things in proportion to the joy that redounds to them, believe no ſtate more delightful than to ſwim in the midſt of pleaſures. And there are alſo thoſe, who deſire to obtain the poſſeſſion of things, not ſo much upon account of the things themſelves, as from other motives: for example, they deſire riches, to procure power and pleaſures; or they deſire power, with a view to heap up wealth or to make their names famous. In theſe caſes, and in others of a like nature, in all that mankind do, in all they wiſh, they have a particular end in view. Thus they ſeek to be ennobled *, and to

* The Romans were ennobled by obtaining the great offices of ſtate; the conſulate, the prætorate, the edileſhip, or quæſtorſhip. The firſt of a family who was honoured with any of theſe offices, was called a new man. They preſerved in their families the portraits or buſts of

to acquire the favour of the multitude, that they may be conſidered as men of importance: thus they wiſh to have a wife and children, becauſe they promiſe themſelves much comfort in a family. With regard to friendſhip *, we ought to conſider it as having no place in this arrangement of things: friendſhip is a gift from Heaven, a kind of ſacred felicity, and ought not to be numbered among the goods of Fortune, but among thoſe of Virtue. In the purſuit of every thing elſe, men have no view but to procure either power or pleaſure. As to the advantages of the body, they fall under the ſame predicament. Thus ſtrength, and a large ſtature, ſeem to be attended with power; beauty, and a fine ſhape, diſtinguiſh a man agreeably; and a firm conſtitution qualifies him for the enjoyment of pleaſures: for in all theſe matters it appears, that happineſs alone is what is ſought after. Now what a man wiſhes for, in preference to all other things, this he muſt eſteem the ſupreme good; which, as we have defined above, is happineſs: hence the happieſt ſtate is that, which is judged deſirable above every other.—Here you have a view of thoſe enjoyments, which miſtaken mortals call Happineſs;

ſuch of their anceſtors as enjoyed the above-mentioned offices. Hence it was, that a man of a very illuſtrious deſcent was ſaid to be *vir multarum imaginum*.

* With regard to friendſhip, we ought to conſider it as a gift from Heaven, a kind of ſacred felicity, not to be numbered among the goods of Fortune, but among thoſe of Virtue.

wealth,

wealth, honours, power, glory, pleaſure. In the laſt of theſe Epicurus placed felicity. He conſidered pleaſure alone as the chief good; believing that the purſuit of every thing elſe, inſtead of rejoicing the mind, tended to diſcompoſe it.

But let us return to the inclinations of mankind. Tho' they forget in what the ſupreme good conſiſts, yet the deſire of it remains unextinguiſhed in their hearts: and they may not improperly be compared to a man intoxicated with liquor, who ſtrives to regain his home, but cannot diſcover the way that leads to it *. Do they wander, do you ſuppoſe, from the ſupreme good, who endeavour to preſerve themſelves from want? No, by no means; for ſurely there is no ſtate happier than that which abounds in every thing, and wherein a man is independent, and needs no aſſiſtance. Or do you think they are in a miſtake, who believe no felicity greater than to attract notice, and procure reſpect? Certainly they are not; for that can never be a contemptible acquiſition, which mankind ſtrive with ſo much earneſtneſs to obtain. Again—Is not power to be numbered among the

* Like drunken ſots about the ſtreets we roam;
Well knows the ſot he has a certain home,
Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,
And blunders on, and ſtaggers ev'ry pace.
Thus all ſeek happineſs, but few can find;
For far the greater part of men are blind.
Dryden's Palamon and Arcite, from Chaucer, B. I.

Is it not probable that Chaucer, who tranſlated the Conſolation of Philoſophy, borrowed the above ſimile from Boethius?

goods that are deſirable? Why not? for how can that be reckoned an inſignificant good, which inveſts a man with authority and command, and ſeems therefore to be of greater importance than any other advantage?—And is fame to be conſidered as of no value? Quite the reverſe; for it cannot be denied, but that every thing excellent is alſo ſhining and renowned. To conclude—I need ſcarce obſerve to you, that happineſs is not an unjoyous and melancholy ſtate, diſturbed with care and ſorrow; becauſe, even in the purſuit of the ſmalleſt matters, men are deſirous of nothing but what gives them pleaſure and ſatisfaction.—Behold, then, the acquiſitions mankind ſtrive to poſſeſs. Hence it is, that they are ſo eager in the purſuit of honour, command, glory, riches, and pleaſures; as they believe, by obtaining *theſe*, they ſhall ſecure to themſelves independence, reſpect, power, fame, and delight. Upon the whole, it is plain, however varied their inclinations, that happineſs is the ſole purſuit of all the human race: and here the wonderful force of nature appears; that, although men's opinions with regard to happineſs widely vary, they nevertheleſs concur in purſuing *it*, as the end of all their actions and deſires.

I'll tune my voice, my harp I'll ſtring,
And Nature's wondrous laws I'll ſing,
That o'er the world's wide circuit reign,
And govern this diſcordant ſcene.

The

The lion, on the Lybian plain,
Submits to wear a ſervile chain;
Devours in peace his offer'd cheer,
And dreads his keeper's laſh ſevere:
But, torn by ſtripes, ſhould the warm gore
Stream his majeſtick viſage o'er,
His noble nature ſtraight returns,
With all his native rage he burns,
His awful roar alarms the plain,
Furious he bounds and burſts his chain;
Springs on his hapleſs keeper firſt,
And with his blood allays his thirſt.

The bird, who caroll'd forth his loves
So ſweetly in the ſhady groves,
When caught, and fed with choiceſt fare,
His maſter's darling and his care,
If haply from his cage he ſpies
The ſcenes of all his former joys,
He ſpurns his food, and fill'd with rage
He fluttering bounds and beats the cage;
In moving notes his woe repeats,
And pines for his belov'd retreats.

Form'd to a curve, the ſapling bends
To the ſtrong hand, and downward tends;
Withdraw the hand's compelling force,
It ſtraight reſumes its native courſe.

The ſun, whoſe all-rejoicing light
Sets in the weſtern main at night,
Thro' nether ſkies his ſecret way
Purſues, returns, and brings the day.

All things, obedient to the ſource
Of order, fill their deſtin'd courſe:
Hence thro' the world's ſtupendous round
Intire ſtability is found;
Which laſts till back, whence it aroſe,
Th' exhauſted frame of nature flows *.

O deluded mortals! it muſt be confeſt, immerſed as you are in terreſtrial objects, that you have nevertheleſs an indiſtinct perception of your beginning; that you behold a ſhadow of it, as through a dream; and that you have alſo an obſcure and imperfect idea of your true end, which is Felicity. Hence it is, that whilſt a natural inſtinct leads you to the true good, a train of phantoms at the ſame time deludes you, and draws you aſtray from it.—Come, then, and conſider with me, if it is poſſible for men to obtain the end they have in view, by the means they uſually employ in the purſuit of happineſs. For if riches, honours, and other advantages of the like nature, crown mortals with felicity, and place them in a ſtate where nothing is wanted or deſired—we muſt acknowledge that happineſs may be procured by theſe acquiſitions. But, on the other hand, if they cannot make good what they promiſe—if they cannot

* Boethius's idea is, that no ſyſtem of things can be under the direction of order, but *that*, which, after having fulfilled its appointed courſe, compleats its round or circle by flowing back to its original.

ſupply every human want—they are but deluſions, that impoſe upon mankind with a counterfeit face of happineſs.

The ſovereign good placed by ſome in the acquiſition of riches.

Let me therefore aſk you, who but lately abounded in riches, if, in the midſt of your opulence, you were never diſcompoſed with receiving an injury?—I muſt confeſs, anſwered I, that I cannot remember I ever was in ſo tranquil a ſtate, as to be totally free from diſquietude.—And did not your anxiety, added ſhe, ariſe either from your wanting ſomething which you deſired to have, or your having ſomething which you wiſhed to be without?—That is certainly true.—Did not you therefore, ſaid ſhe, deſire the poſſeſſion of the one, and the privation of the other?—I acknowledged I did.—But a man wants what he deſires.—Undoubtedly he does.—And if a man wants any thing, can that man be ſaid to be completely happy?—No.—Were not you then in this ſtate of inſufficiency, whilſt you were in the midſt of your opulence?—What then?—It follows, added ſhe, that riches cannot make a man ſo rich as to want nothing: this, however, is what they ſeemed to promiſe. But, beſides, I think we ought always to remember, that riches are by no means a ſure and permanent good; as a man may undoubtedly be ſtripped of his wealth by violence, however unwilling he is to part with it.—He may ſo.—How can it be otherwiſe, ſaid ſhe, when you behold every day the

ſtronger depriving the weaker of his property? For do not all complaints to courts of juſtice hence ariſe, one party reclaiming the goods he has been diſpoſſeſſed of by the oppreſſion and fraud of the other?—Nothing is more true.—There is not any one perſon, added ſhe, that does not ſtand in need of the aſſiſtance of others, to preſerve his riches. But he would not ſurely need this help, did he not poſſeſs what he is in danger of loſing.—That is certain.—You ſee, then, continued ſhe, the very reverſe of what was expected from riches takes place: ſo far are they from being ſufficient to a man's wants, that they are the cauſe of his having more occaſion for the aſſiſtance of others. But tell me, How is it that men's wants are ſupplied by riches? Is it becauſe the rich never feel hunger, are not liable to thirſt, or that their bodies are inſenſible to the winter's cold? But the wealthy, you'll ſay, have ſupplies in abundance to anſwer all neceſſities, to relieve hunger and thirſt, and to repel cold. In theſe matters, it muſt be acknowledged that riches aid and comfort indigence, but they can by no means ſatisfy every want. For as we know, with reſpect to riches, the deſires of mankind are unbounded, ever gaping and clamouring for more, in the midſt of the greateſt abundance; it of courſe follows, that there are cravings remaining in the human breaſt, which ſtill want ſupply, and which will never ceaſe to torment

it,

it. I need ſcarcely add, that a little ſuffices Nature, whilſt Avarice exclaims ſhe never has enough. Upon the whole, ſince riches, inſtead of exempting from wants, create new ones; how can mortals ſuppoſe that a ſufficiency is obtained by them for all their neceſſities?

Tho' ſtreams of gold pour in from every ſide,
The reſtleſs miſer ne'er is ſatisfied;
Tho' pearls and diamonds 'mid his treaſures blaze,
His verdant fields tho' herds unnumber'd graze,
Conſuming cares his joyleſs days attend;
His uſeleſs wealth forſakes him at his end.

The ſovereign good placed by others in the obtaining of power and honours.

But dignities, you'll ſay, render the perſons inveſted with them eminent and reſpectable. What! have they the power to deſtroy vice, and implant virtue in the heart? Surely not; for we learn from experience, that places of dignity, inſtead of eradicating vicious habits, for the moſt part ſerve only to ſtrengthen them, and make them more conſpicuous. Hence we are always filled with indignation, when we behold honours conferred on the wicked. Hence aroſe the poet Catullus's reſentment againſt Nonius the ſenator, whom he calls the bile or impoſthume of the ſtate. Is not the diſgrace, that honours devolve upon the worthleſs, very apparent? Their baſeneſs ſurely would have been leſs glaring, if they had not been exalted to ſuch dignified ſtations. Would you redeem

deem yourſelf from the danger that at preſent hangs over you, by accepting a magiſtracy in conjunction with Decoratus, that infamous buffoon and informer? Can we perſuade ourſelves that honours render perſons reſpectable whom we know to be unworthy of them? If you find a man endowed with wiſdom, you deem him worthy of reſpect: for there is a worth peculiar to virtue, which ſhe never fails to communicate to her votaries. But as honours conferred by the populace do not convey this worth, it is manifeſt they have it not to beſtow, and that they are void of all intrinſick merit. Here it ought to be particularly conſidered—as a perſon, the more his unworthineſs is expoſed, becomes thereby the more contemptible; and as eminent dignities cannot make men, who are abandoned, reſpectable; they muſt, therefore, as they place the vices of theſe profligates in a more conſpicuous point of view, render them more univerſally the objects of contempt and hatred. Neither do the dignities themſelves eſcape without injury; men of worthleſs characters take their revenge upon them, whilſt they ſully and diſgrace them by the contagion of their guilt. But it is very eaſy to ſhow you, theſe ſhadowy honours have nothing in their nature to engage and procure reſpect; for if a perſon, though he had been honoured ſeveral times with the Conſulate, ſhould by accident go among a barbarous people, would this honour render him more

more reſpectable in their eyes? Certainly it would not. But this it would infallibly do every where, if reſpect was an attribute of honours, as heat is to fire, which is hot in every country on earth. Thus, becauſe reſpect is not inſeparably attached to dignified ſtations, but is only attributed to them by men's falſe opinions, honours muſt therefore appear vain and frivolous to people who ſee them in their true light; and as ſuch, they aſſuredly appear to all diſtant nations. —But let me now aſk you, Whether, in the very countries that gave birth to them, places of dignity always continue equally reſpectable? The prætorate, the dignity and authority whereof was formerly ſo great, you know is nothing now but an empty title, and in point of expence a heavy burthen to the ſenators. The ſuperintendency of proviſions, which was heretofore an honourable office, is now conſidered as a very deſpicable employment. But whence doth this ariſe? Why it proceeds from what we juſt now obſerved, that thoſe things, which have nothing intrinſically good and meritorious, loſe their ſplendour and value, as popular opinion varies concerning them. Thus, if dignities cannot render reſpectable thoſe who are inveſted with them; if they are themſelves ſullied by the diſhonour which bad men reflect upon them; if they loſe their ſplendour by a change of times; if, in fine, they are of no value among nations who juſtly conſider them; what

what beauty, what inherent worth have they to render them the ſupreme objects of deſire? and how is it poſſible that they can ever communicate worth to thoſe upon whom they devolve?

Tho' Nero ſhone in glittering veſtments gay,
And flowing purple mark'd his ſovereign ſway;
Yet ſuch a *chief*, ſo profligate and baſe,
Was ever deem'd a ſcourge to human race.
This wretch howe'er dealt round, with impious hand,
The ſtate's chief honours to his ſlaviſh band.
Can honours, then, the ſovereign good beſtow,
From ſuch a ſource when dignity may flow?

But do kingdoms, and a familiarity with princes, render men powerful and happy?—Why ſhould they not, if they are durable? Paſt ages however, and the preſent, furniſh us with too many examples of the diſmal reverſes of fortune to which crowned heads are liable. O then, may I exclaim, the wonderful efficacy of power, which is not able to preſerve itſelf! But if happineſs is meaſured by the extent of regal dominion, whereever this ends, will not happineſs alſo there end, and miſery take place? Now, though ſeveral empires be far extended, it muſt ſtill be acknowledged their limits are bounded by other nations over whom they have no reign. But where-

ever

ever power, which conſtitutes happineſs, ceaſes, there impotence, which creates miſery, muſt prevail: and hence it neceſſarily follows, that kings muſt have a larger portion ofmiſery than of happineſs. Dionyſius, the tyrant of Syracuſe *, conſcious

* The ſtory here alluded to is related very elegantly by Cicero, in the vth Book of his Tuſculan Queſtions.

Nam cum quidam ex ejus aſſentatoribus, Damocles, commemoraret in ſermone copias ejus, opes, majeſtatem dominatûs, rerum abundantiam, magnificentiam ædium regiarum, negaretque unquam beatiorem quenquam fuiſſe—Viſne igitur, inquit, O Damocle, quoniam hæc te vita delectat, ipſe eandem deguſtare, et fortunam experiri meam? Cum ſe ille cupere dixiſſet, collocari juſſit hominem in aureo lecto, ſtrato pulcherrimo textili ſtragulo, magnificis operibus picto; abacoſque complures ornavit argento auroque cœlato. Tum ad menſam eximiâ formâ pueros delectos juſſit conſiſtere, eoſque ad nutum illius intuentes diligenter miniſtrare. Aderant unguenta, coronæ; incendebantur odores; menſæ conquiſitiſſimis epulis extruebantur. Fortunatus ſibi Damocles videbatur. In hoc medio apparatu, fulgentem gladium e lacunari, ſetâ equinâ appenſum, demitti juſſit, ut impenderet illius beati cervicibus. Itaque nec pulchros illos adminiſtratores aſpiciebat, nec plenum artis argentum; nec manum porrigebat in menſam; jam ipſæ defluebant coronæ: denique exoravit tyrannum ut abire liceret, quod jam beatus nollet eſſe.—Satiſne videtur declaraſſe Dionyſius, nihil eſſe ei beatum, cui ſemper aliquis terror impendeat?

For when Damocles, one of his paraſites, having launched forth in praiſe of the ſplendour of his dominion, the number of his forces, the magnificence of his palace, and his amazing opulence, averring that there never was any man ſo happy—Will you then, ſays the tyrant to Damocles, have a taſte of this life you are ſo delighted with, and make a trial of my fortune? It is what I wiſh, replied the paraſite. Upon which, he was placed upon a bed of gold, with ſplendid coverings, adorned with the richeſt embroidery. The table was ſet forth, and decorated with gold and ſilver plate of the moſt curious workmanſhip. Some very beautiful young ſlaves were ordered to wait at table, and were enjoined to watch his looks, and ſerve him at the ſmalleſt ſignal. The moſt exquiſite viands were preſented to him, with an abundance

ſcious of the danger of his condition, exhibited very ſtrikingly the alarms of royalty, by the terror of a naked ſword ſuſpended by a ſingle hair, and hanging over the head. How inſignificant a thing then is power, which cannot protect from the tormenting ſtings of fear, and the reſtleſs gnawings of anxiety! Kings are deſirous of living in a ſtate of ſecurity; but this ſtate, alas! they cannot obtain: an illuſtrious mark, ſurely, of that

abundance of eſſences, garlands, and perfumes. Damocles thought himſelf perfectly happy: when the tyrant, in the middle of this ſplendid feaſt, commanded a drawn ſword, of the brighteſt poliſh, to be ſuſpended by a ſingle horſe-hair juſt over the head of this man ſo enchanted with his happineſs. Immediately all his felicity fled; his eyes were no more delighted with the beautiful attendants and ſuperb plate; the delicacies that were ſet before him loſt their reliſh; the garlands that bound his brows fell down of themſelves. In ſhort, he aſked the tyrant's permiſſion to retire, becauſe that now he did not chuſe to be happy.—Doth it not hence ſufficiently appear, that Dionyſius declared himſelf miſerable, as he was conſcious there were ſo many imminent dangers conſtantly ſurrounding him?

Horace alſo alludes to this ſtory, in Book III. Ode i.

Diſtrictus enſis cui ſuper impia
Cervice pendet, non Siculæ dapes
Dulcem elaborabunt ſaporem,
Non avium citharæque cantus
Somnum reducent.

Behold the wretch, with conſcious dread,
In pointed vengeance o'er his head,
Who views th' impending ſword;
Not dainties force his pall'd deſire,
Nor chaunt of birds nor vocal lyre
To him can ſleep afford.

FRANCIS.

power

power which they plume themſelves ſo much upon! But do you believe that man powerful, whom you ſee eagerly wiſhing what he cannot accompliſh? Eſteem you him powerful, who goes ſurrounded with an armed guard, and who terrifies thoſe of whom he himſelf is more afraid? And is he, in fine, to be reckoned powerful, whoſe power depends ſolely upon his numerous attendants?—After having thus diſplayed the imbecillity of kings, why need I enlarge upon that of their favourites, whoſe fortune is liable to be overturned, not only by the inconſtancy of a capricious maſter in proſperity, but alſo by the adverſity to which he is incident, whereof his minions muſt neceſſarily partake? Nero would grant no other favour to Seneca, his friend and preceptor, than to make choice of the death he was to ſuffer. Caracalla commanded Papinian, who had been long powerful at court, to be ſlaughtered by his ſoldiers *. Such was the fate of theſe great men, though before their diſgrace they were willing to reſign their authority, and to retreat from court: nay, Seneca offered to put Nero in poſſeſſion of all his wealth; and begged

* Papinian was a famous lawyer, and is ſaid to have excelled all of his profeſſion who preceded and followed him. He was in great favour with the emperor Severus, Caracalla's father, by whom he was made præfect of the palace; and when that emperor died, he committed his ſons Caracalla and Geta to his charge. Papinian was a man of the greateſt worth and integrity. He was ſlaughtered by Caracalla, becauſe he condemned his cruelty in the murder of his brother Geta.

of

of him only liberty to retire, and enjoy eaſe and tranquillity. But relentleſs Fortune precipitated both of theſe favourites to deſtruction, and would not permit them to obtain what they wiſhed. Of what value then is this power, which fills men with perpetual dread, and which can neither be retained with ſafety nor laid down at pleaſure?—But perhaps you value power becauſe it procures you friends. What advantage, tell me, can you derive from thoſe friends, whom your proſperity, but not your virtue, attaches to you? Be aſſured of this, that if proſperity hath made you a friend, adverſity will make him your enemy *. And what plague will be more efficacious in hurting you, than an enemy in whom you repoſed all your confidence?

True ſov'reign power who would obtain,
A conqueſt o'er himſelf muſt gain;
Nor let his paſſions wildly ſtray,
And ſnatch him from himſelf away;
Their turbulence muſt all be broke,
And tam'd to reaſon's gentle yoke.

* Ovid ſays,

Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos;
Tempora ſi fuerint nubila, ſolus eris.

When proſperous Fortune ſhines with bright'ning rays,
Your friends in crowds around you flatt'ring grow;
But when th' *inconſtant* dims with clouds your days,
Alone they leave you to lament your woe.

What

What tho' you ſtretch your wide command,
From diſtant India's fruitful land
To utmoſt Thule's lonely ſhore *,
And reign the world's wide empire o'er:
Yet, if this plentitude of ſway
Drives not corroding care away;
If phantoms vain ſtill break your reſt;
If grief and rage diſtract your breaſt;
Alas! you boaſt your power in vain,
And ſtill an abject ſlave remain.

The glory of great atchievements eſteemed by ſome the ſovereign good.

But how unſatisfactory and fallacious is what you mortals call fame or glory! And as it may be unworthily acquired, is it not often ignominious? So that the tragic poet very juſtly exclaims,

How oft have erring mortals crown'd the baſe
With glory and unmerited renown †!

For it muſt be acknowledged, that multitudes have obtained a ſhining reputation from nothing elſe but the prejudices of a misjudging populace. Now what can be more infamous than renown built upon ſuch a foundation? For unmerited praiſes ought ſurely to overwhelm with ſhame

* Solinus informs us that many ſmall iſlands lie round Britain, the northernmoſt of which is Thule, where there is almoſt no night in the ſummer ſolſtice, when the ſun is in Cancer. Some imagine that Thule is Iceland.

† Theſe two lines are taken from Euripides's tragedy of Andromache.

thoſe to whom they are addreſſed, as they muſt be conſcious they have no title to them. But when juſt and well-merited praiſes are given to a wiſe and good man, do they add any thing to his felicity? Do they encreaſe the inward ſatisfaction and complacency of him, who places his happineſs, not in the applauſes of a giddy multitude, but in the teſtimony of an upright conſcience? It is alſo manifeſt, that if a man eſteems it glorious to propagate his fame, he muſt of courſe think it diſhonourable not to do it. But, as we formerly remarked, there are a great many nations to whom the fame of even the moſt illuſtrious characters cannot reach; it follows therefore, that he whom you look upon as exalted to the very pinnacle of glory, muſt be totally unknown to far the greateſt part of the earth. The more I conſider this matter, I am the more confirmed in my opinion, that the favour of the multitude is unworthy of attention, as it is very ſeldom judicious, and never permanent.

Nobility of birth accounted the ſovereign good.

But who is there that does not perceive the emptineſs and futility of what men dignify with the name of high extraction, or nobility of birth? The ſplendor you attribute to this, is quite foreign to you: for nobility of deſcent is nothing elſe but the credit derived from the merit of your anceſtors. If it is the applauſe of mankind, and nothing beſides, that illuſtrates and confers fame upon a perſon; no others can be celebrated

brated and famous, but ſuch as are univerſally applauded. If you are not therefore eſteemed illuſtrious from your own worth, you can derive no real ſplendor from the merits of others: ſo that, in my opinion, nobility is in no other reſpect good, than as it impoſes an obligation upon its poſſeſſors, not to degenerate from the merit of their anceſtors.

Ye mortals vain who tread the earth,
Ye draw from one great origin your birth:
From that unbounded Pow'r ſupreme,
Who made and governs this ſtupendous frame,
He Phœbus with his rays adorns,
And gilds the ſilver Cynthia's dewy horns:
He fill'd with ſtars th' etherial ſpace,
And peopled earth with man's imperial race:
He from his eſſence pure a ray
Took, and infus'd with ſoul the lifeleſs clay.
Such the deſcent of high and low;
They all from the ſame ſtem illuſtrious flow.
Why boaſt ye then your num'rous train
Of anceſtors, and vaunt your noble ſtrain?
Since all from God derive their line,
And nought ignoble ſprings from power divine;
Go,—imitate your Sire above;
Your pedigree by deeds deſerving prove:
For none degen'rate is, and baſe,
But he who from his ſource and virtue ſtrays.

Senſual pleaſures eſteemed the ſovereign good.

But what ſhall I ſay, with reſpect to ſenſual pleaſures? Is not the appetite, that prompts to the enjoyment of theſe, always attended with anxiety, and the fruition itſelf with repentance? What diſeaſes, what intolerable pains (the merited fruits of vice), do they not bring upon thoſe who are abandoned to them? The delight that flows from their gratification, I am unacquainted with; but this I know, the reflection upon theſe criminal indulgences is always accompanied with bitter remorſe. If happineſs conſiſts in the enjoyment of theſe gratifications, I ſee no reaſon why the brutes may not attain to it; as they are wholly employed in ſatisfying the cravings of ſenſuality. It might be reaſonably expected, that much comfort would be found in a wife and children: but this does not always happen. I have heard of a perſon who bitterly exclaimed, that he had found tormentors in his own offspring—an unhappy ſtate for a parent. But as you have not experienced any miſeries ariſing from this ſource, neither are under the apprehenſion of diſtreſs from ſuch painful feelings, I ſhall not ſtop to deſcribe them to you. I will only add to this a ſentiment of my diſciple Euripides; who obſerves, that he who has no children is happy in his misfortune.

Honey's flow'ry ſweets delight;—
Soon they cloy the appetite.

Touch

Touch the Bee—the wrathful thing
Quickly flies—but leaves a ſting.

Mark here the emblems, apt and true,
Of the pleaſures men purſue:
Ah! they yield a fraudful joy;
Soon they pall, and quick they fly;
Quick they fly—but leave a ſmart
Deep-fermenting in the heart.

Happineſs, or the ſovereign good, not to be found in the before-mentioned external things.

It appears then unqueſtionably evident, that happineſs can never be obtained, by purſuing the ways we have mentioned; that they are all falſe and erroneous; and tho' they promiſe to lead men to the ſovereign good, they do by no means perform what they undertake. But without entering into a long detail, I ſhall now explain the evils with which theſe pretended ways to happineſs are perplexed. To proceed then—Do you deſire to accumulate ſtores of wealth? to accompliſh this, you ſtrip your neighbours of their poſſeſſions. Do you thirſt after the ſplendor of dignities? you muſt ſupplicate thoſe that beſtow them: and thus, inſtead of exalting yourſelf, and becoming reſpectable, you incur diſgrace by the moſt humiliating condeſcenſion. Is power your ambition? in purſuing it, you expoſe yourſelf to the ſnares of inferiors, and lay yourſelf open to danger from every quarter. Do you contend for glory? you will encounter a thouſand vexatious obſtructions, and muſt give up your tranquillity for it. Do you prefer a voluptuous life? in

what ſovereign contempt is he not held, who becomes a ſlave to ſuch a wretched and contemptible thing as his body? Farther, you muſt ſurely confeſs that they raiſe their pride upon a ſlight and fallacious foundation, who felicitate themſelves upon their bodily advantages. Say—do you ſurpaſs the elephant in bulk, the bull in ſtrength, or can you outſtrip the tyger in the race? Go, and contemplate the immenſe extent of the heavens; go and examine, what is ſtill more admirable, that conſummate wiſdom which governs them; and no longer conſider, as objects of admiration, things worthleſs and contemptible. As to beauty, how tranſient! and of how ſhort a duration! fading ſooner than the vernal flower.—If men, as Ariſtotle ſays, had the eyes of a lynx, which could pierce through all preventing obſtacles; in taking a view of the interior of a body, as lovely as that of Alcibiades; would not they find it foul and diſguſting? It is not therefore to the qualities inherent in their bodies, that mortals are indebted for their beauty; but to the limited and imperfect view of thoſe who behold them. But prize as highly as you pleaſe the perfections of the body, ſtill you muſt confeſs, that it may be brought to a period in three days, by the raging flames of a fever. From the whole, we may draw this concluſion—As the things above mentioned do not comprize every good, and do not beſtow the advantages which they promiſe,

they cannot of themſelves either render men happy, or become the means of procuring happineſs.

* Ah! how, by phantoms falſe beguil'd,
And blind to Truth's propitious ray,
Vain men in mazes dark and wild,
Through ignorance, are made to ſtray!

Yet gold they ſeek not from the trees,
Nor ſparkling diamonds from the vine,
Nor, Ocean's dainty brood to ſeize,
On mountains place th' enſnaring twine:

Nor yet to hunt the clamb'ring goat,
They ſearch the ſhelves that tides o'erflow;—
But what the wealth of ſeas remote,
And where to find it, well they know;

Where moſt the † ſnowy gems abound,
And where the ‡ radiant purple dwells;
Where finny fiſh are richeſt found,
Or § urchins clad in briſtly ſhells.—

* The tranſlation of this metrum was done by my late brother.

† The pearls are found in a ſhell-fiſh reſembling the oyſter, but larger.

‡ This dye is found in a ſhell-fiſh; it was much uſed by the ancients, particularly by the Tyrians.

§ A ſea-urchin, a delicious ſhell-fiſh, a kind of crab, having briſtles inſtead of feet.

But where the ſovereign good abides,
The blinded mortals never know;
In heavenly manſions what reſides,
They vainly try to find below.

What doom deſerve the ſilly race?
Falſe joys why let them ſtill purſue;
Till, cheated with the ſhadowy chace,
Too late they languiſh for the true *.

I have been hitherto employed in giving you a view of *falſe happineſs*. As I am perſuaded you have conſidered it attentively, I ſhall now proceed to ſhew wherein real and genuine felicity conſiſts.—I ſee very clearly, ſaid I, that there is no ſufficiency, nothing fully ſatisfactory in riches, nothing powerful in royalty, nothing reſpectable in dignities, nothing ſhining in glory, nothing delightful in pleaſures.—But do you perceive, ſaid ſhe, the cauſe of all this?—A glimmering of it only ſtrikes me, but I ſhall be happy to know the reaſon of it more diſtinctly from you. The cauſe, ſaid ſhe, is obvious; for that which is one and indiviſible in Nature, human ignorance ſeparates; and hence men are miſled from what is true and perfect, to that which is imperfect and counterfeit. This truth I ſhall now endeavour to explain. Tell me then, does that ſtate which ſtands in need of no-

* Virtutem videant, intabeſcantque relicta.
HORACE.

thing,

thing, want power?—No.—You are in the right, ſaid ſhe, for if any thing wants power, it muſt want alſo external aid.—That is true.—Therefore you muſt confeſs that ſufficiency and power are of one and the ſame nature.—This I acknowledge.—And do you think, added ſhe, that advantages of ſuch a nature, as power and ſufficiency, are to be condemned? On the contrary, are they not worthy of univerſal reſpect?—Unqueſtionably they are.—Let us add therefore, ſaid ſhe, reſpect to ſufficiency and power, and let us conſider all *three* as one and the ſame thing.—I ſee no objection to their being conſidered in that view.—But can that be an obſcure and ignoble ſtate, continued ſhe, which poſſeſſes ſuch extraordinary advantages? or rather, is it not brightened by a ſhining reputation? For reflect but a little: Have you not already granted that the ſtate we now ſpeak of is powerful and reſpectable, and that it wants nothing? but if it wants a ſhining reputation, which it cannot of itſelf ſupply, is it not by this defect, in ſome degree, inſufficient?—Surely it is, anſwered I; and I muſt confeſs that reputation is inſeparable from the advantages you have mentioned.—You muſt agree therefore, ſaid ſhe, that the latter differs in nothing from the *three* before mentioned.—The conſequence is juſt.—If any one then, continued ſhe, is in ſuch a ſtate that he needs no external aſſiſtance, but by himſelf can procure

procure all he wants, and beſides, is illuſtrious and reſpectable; is it not evident that ſuch a perſon's condition muſt be very agreeable and pleaſant?—I cannot indeed conceive, I replied, how any thing diſagreeable or unpleaſant can accompany ſuch a ſtate.—It muſt undoubtedly, ſaid ſhe, be a ſtate of happineſs, if what we have before eſtabliſhed holds good. And from this, it plainly follows, that ſufficiency, power, reputation, reſpect, pleaſure, are all one and the ſame; differing only in name, but not in ſubſtance.—This, ſaid I, is a neceſſary conſequence.—All theſe things, added ſhe, which are by nature the ſame and indiviſible, mankind, by an effect of their depravity, divide: but while they labour to acquire a part of a thing, which has no parts, they neither obtain what they ſeek, as it does not exiſt, nor the thing itſelf, which they have not directly in their view.—But how does this happen? ſaid I.—He that deſires riches, to preſerve himſelf from want, replied ſhe, is not ſolicitous about power: he prefers meanneſs and obſcurity, and denies himſelf pleaſures the moſt natural, that he may not leſſen the heaps he ſtrives to accumulate. But you muſt ſurely confeſs that a ſtate of ſufficiency cannot be *his*, who is deſtitute of power, barred from pleaſures, corroded with chagrin, deſpicable, and buried in obſcurity. But he again whoſe ambition is power alone, ſacrifices to this purſuit wealth,

wealth, deſpiſes pleaſures, ſlights glory, nor does he hold dignity in eſtimation, unleſs when accompanied with power. The many advantages wanting to ſuch a perſon are palpable. He muſt often want things eſſentially neceſſary, and be tormented with anxiety: and as he will find it impoſſible to guard againſt thoſe evils, he will ſoon be convinced that he is far from being powerful. In the ſame way may we reaſon with regard to honours, glory, and pleaſure. For as all theſe things are by nature one and the ſame, he that purſues any one of them ſeparately from the others; will never obtain what he deſires.—But what, ſaid I, if a man deſires *them all* at once?—He would then indeed deſire perfect felicity. But can he ever expect to find it in the acquiſitions above-mentioned, which, as we have ſhewn, do not perform what they promiſe?—No ſurely, ſaid I.—In theſe acquiſitions therefore, which are falſely ſuppoſed capable of ſupplying every human deſire, happineſs you acknowledge is by no means to be ſought for?—Of the truth of this, I am perfectly convinced.—Thus then, continued ſhe, I have given you a compleat view of falſe happineſs, and of its cauſes: you have now nothing more to do, than to turn the eye of your mind upon the reverſe of all this, and you will inſtantly perceive *the true happineſs* which I promiſed to ſhew you.—There is none ſo blind, ſaid I, that may not clearly perceive

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that ineſtimable good. I had a complete view of it when you juſt now explained to me the characteriſticks of its opponent: for, if I am not deceived, true felicity conſiſts in a ſtate of * ſufficiency, of power, and honour, in conjunction with a ſhining reputation, and every deſirable pleaſure. And, to ſatisfy you how much your leſſons have enlightened my underſtanding, I declare to you, I am perfectly convinced, that genuine felicity is what is beſtowed by theſe advantages, as they are, in reality, all one and the ſame.—O my dear pupil, exclaimed ſhe, how happy are you in ſuch a conviction! But you muſt add to it one limitation.—What is that?—Do you believe that the frail and periſhing enjoyments of earth have this ſtate of happineſs in their diſpoſal?—No; by no means, anſwered I: you have proved the contrary ſo clearly, that I have no doubt remaining upon this point.—Theſe periſhing enjoyments, added ſhe, furniſh mankind only with the ſhadow of the ſupreme good, or at moſt with goods that are extremely imperfect; but as for true conſummate Felicity, this they have not in their power to beſtow.—I told her, I was entirely of her opinion.

The true characteriſticks of happineſs or the ſovereign good.

* The characteriſticks of the ſovereign good, given us by the learned and ingenious Mr. Harris, in his Dialogue concerning Happineſs, which contains the beſt and moſt conſiſtent view of the Stoick Philoſophy that ever was publiſhed, are, That it is agreeable to our nature, conducive to well-being, accommodated to all places and times, durable, ſelf-derived, and indeprivable.

—But

—But as you have now, continued ſhe, diſcovered what the true felicity is, and know how to diſtinguiſh it from the falſe; what now remains, is to teach you where you are to ſeek for this ſupreme good.—This is what I have long wiſhed for.—But if it be neceſſary, added ſhe, as Plato obſerves in his Timæus, to implore the Divine aſſiſtance, even in the ſmalleſt enterprizes; what think you ought we to do, to render us worthy of ſo important a diſcovery as that of the ſovereign good?—Let us invoke, replied I, the Parent of Nature: without firſt addreſſing him, no work is well begun, nor can be rightly conducted.—You are in the right, ſaid ſhe; and immediately warbled forth, with delightful melody, the following hymn:

O Thou! who by eternal Reaſon's law
The world doſt rule! great Parent of the heavens
And of the earth! by whoſe command ſupreme,
Time flows from birth of ages! who, unchang'd
And firm thyſelf, mak'ſt all things elſe to move *;
Thy ſovereign will to fleeting matter gave
Its various forms, by no external cauſe
Impell'd, but by the idea of the Beſt
In thy great mind conceiv'd, of malice void:

* The Platonick doctrine of a ſovereign mind is, that it is ſtable in itſelf, yet the fountain of all motion, and operating good perpetually, by a perpetual efflux of form and beauty. *Note from Sydenham's elegant tranſlation of the greater Hippias.* p. 95.

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The mighty model, fram'd by art divine
Ere ages yet began, thou copiedſt forth
In this vaſt world; whence, all that's good and fair,
The lively image of the fair Supreme. *

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O gracious Parent! elevate our ſouls,
And give us acceſs to thy throne ſublime,
That ſtable ſeat of pure felicity!
All earth-born cares remove; diſpel the miſts
Of ſenſe; and with a ray from heav'n illume
Our darken'd minds. Give us to ſee thy light;
Give us to view the ſource of good unveil'd;
And fix, O ever fix our eyes on thee!
Delighted may we reſt on thee, the ſtay
And joy of hallow'd ſouls, and center all
Our happineſs on thee, our Sire benign,
Our guide, protector, ſolace, hope, and goal!

Happineſs, or the ſovereign good, really exiſts, and reſides in the Deity, who is the ſovereign and the only good.

As a faithful repreſentation of falſe happineſs, and of the true Felicity, has been repreſented to you, I ſhall now proceed to explain, wherein the

* The 12 lines that follow, in the original, refer to ſome of the moſt ſubtile, abſtruſe parts of Plato's Philoſophy; and are very obſcure. I have not tranſlated them, as I deſpaired of making any verſion of them, that would be ſatisfactory to myſelf, or agreeable to my readers.

The firſt 13 verſes of this tranſlation were given me by my brother before-mentioned.

The original of the verſes in this metrum is remarkably beautiful.

perfection

perfection of Felicity conſiſts. In view to this, we ought firſt to examine, whether there exiſts in nature ſuch a good as you have lately defined; that our imagination may not deceive us, in taking a mere chimera for a thing that is real, and has a being. But that the ſovereign good does exiſt, and that it is the ſource and center of every other good, cannot be denied. In fact, when we call a thing imperfect, it is only to diſtinguiſh it from ſome other thing that is perfect. Hence, if any thing, of whatever particular claſs or kind of exiſtence it be, appears to be imperfect; there muſt of neceſſity be alſo ſome other thing that is perfect in this very claſs: for if you take away perfection, imperfection ceaſes to exiſt, and becomes a term quite unintelligible. Nature alſo doth not commence her operations by rude and unfiniſhed productions: ſhe forms, at firſt, the beſt works, the pureſt and moſt complete; but afterwards gives birth to things leſs perfect and efficacious. So that, if, as we have before ſhewn, there is an imperfect felicity in this world, there muſt be alſo in it a ſolid and a perfect one.—Your concluſion, is moſt juſt and true.—It will not now be difficult to diſcover, continued ſhe, where this true Felicity reſides. Every mind endowed with apprehenſion and judgment, finds in itſelf a proof that God, the author of all things, is good. For, as we can conceive nothing better than God, can we have

have any doubt but that he, who has no equal in goodneſs, is good? And Reaſon, while it thus demonſtrates ſo clearly that God is good, evinces at the ſame time, that the ſovereign good reſides in him. For if this were not ſo, God could not poſſibly be, as he really is, the author of all things; for there would be ſome other Being more excellent than he is, who poſſeſſes the ſupreme good, and who muſt have exiſted before him; becauſe all perfect things plainly precede things that are leſs complete. That our reaſonings may not therefore run on into infinity, we muſt confeſs that the Supreme God comprehends in his nature a plenitude of perfect and conſummate good: but perfect good we have proved to be true felicity. It neceſſarily follows, then, that true felicity reſides in the Supreme Divinity.—This muſt be admitted, ſaid I, as I can ſee nothing that can be objected againſt it.—But I pray you, continued ſhe, let us ſee how you can firmly and irrefragably prove what I have advanced, that the Supreme God contains in his nature a plenitude of perfect and conſummate good.—How ſhall I prove that? replied I.—Do you ſuppoſe, ſaid ſhe, that the Author and Parent of all things hath received the ſupreme good, with which, as we have ſhown, he abounds, from any thing extraneous or without? or, do you imagine, that the ſubſtance of this *felicity*, which reſides in God, is in any reſpect different from *that* of the Deity himſelf? If you

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe that Deity hath received this good from without, you muſt likewiſe believe, that what beſtows a thing, is more excellent than what receives it. But we have already admitted, what cannot be denied, there is nothing more excellent than God: it is therefore manifeſt that he cannot derive this felicity from any thing without. But if this good is ſuppoſed to dwell in God, and to be of a different ſubſtance, it is inconceivable, allowing God to be the author of all things, what could have united theſe two ſubſtances that thus differ from one another. Beſides, a thing which differs from another, cannot be the ſame with that from which it is ſuppoſed to differ; conſequently, what differs in eſſence from the ſupreme good, cannot be the ſupreme good: but it would be blaſphemy thus to conceive of God; as it is manifeſt nothing can be more pure and perfect than that ſovereign and independent Being. In fact, nothing can exiſt whoſe nature is better than its origin. We may therefore conclude, with abſolute certainty, that the origin of all things is really and ſubſtantially the ſupreme good.—Undoubtedly we may.—But did not you own, ſaid ſhe, that true felicity was the ſovereign good? —I confeſs I did.—You muſt therefore alſo grant that God is that very felicity.—I can neither call in queſtion, anſwered I, your principles, nor the conſequence which you draw from them.—Let us now try, continued ſhe, whether we cannot prove

the ſame thing more convincingly by conſidering it in this view, that two ſovereign goods, different from one another, cannot exiſt. For of the good that differs, it is apparent one cannot be what the other is: therefore neither of them can be perfect, as the one wants the other. But if neither of them are perfect, it is evident that neither the one or the other is the ſovereign good. As ſuch goods cannot differ from one another; and we have before proved, that God and Happineſs are the ſovereign good; it neceſſarily follows that the Sovereign Felicity, and Supreme Divinity, are one and the ſame.—There is nothing, ſaid I, more conſiſtent with reaſon and truth, and nothing more ſuitable to the perfections of the Deity, than the conſequence which you have at preſent drawn.—But I ſhall now, added ſhe, following the example of the geometricians, who commonly deduce from their demonſtrations, what they call corollaries, infer, from what has been advanced, a moſt honourable one for man. I ſay then, ſince men become happy by the enjoyment of Felicity, and as Felicity is the ſame with the Divinity himſelf, it is manifeſt, that they become happy by the enjoyment of the Divinity. But as by the participation of juſtice, or of wiſdom, men become juſt or wiſe; ſo, by the participating of Divinity, they muſt neceſſarily, and for the very ſame reaſon, become Gods. Conſequently every happy man

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is a God *; for tho' there is but one in eſſence, there is nothing to hinder but there may be many, by a participation of the Divine Nature.—I allow, ſaid I, that this corollary is admirable, and of infinite value.—But what I am juſt going to add, ſaid ſhe, is ſtill more worthy of your admiration.—What is that?—As happineſs appears to be an aſſemblage of many things, ought we not to conſider whether theſe ſeveral things conſtitute, conjunctly, the body of happineſs? if I may ſo expreſs myſelf; or whether there is not ſome one of theſe particular things that compoſes its eſſence, and to which all the reſt have a relation?—I wiſh, ſaid I, you would illuſtrate this matter by examples.—Do you not believe, added ſhe, that happineſs is a good?—Yes certainly, anſwered I; and the ſupreme good.—You may ſay the

* The Stoicks expreſs themſelves very ſtrongly upon this point. Epictetus ſays to his pupil, "You are a diſtinct portion of the eſſence "of God, and contain a certain part of him in yourſelf. Why "then are you ignorant of your noble birth? Why do not you conſider "whence you came? Why do not you remember, when you are eat-"ing, who you are that eateſt; and who that feedeſt? When you are "in the company of women; when you are converſing; when you are "exerciſing; when you are diſputing; do you not know that it is "a God you feed, a God you exerciſe? You carry a God about with "you, wretch, and know nothing of it. Do you ſuppoſe I mean ſome "God without you, of gold or ſilver? It is within yourſelf you "carry him, and profane him, without being ſenſible of it, by impure "thoughts and unclean actions." Mrs. Carter's Arrian, Book II. Ch. viii. S. 2.

The apoſtle Paul talks in more moderate terms, when he repreſents the bodies of good men as the temples of the Holy Ghoſt.

ſame, continued ſhe, of all the other goods; for perfect ſufficiency is reckoned ſupreme felicity; ſo is ſupreme power; ſo likewiſe is an honourable rank, a ſhining reputation, and a life of pleaſure.—What do you conclude from all this?—Are all theſe things, anſwered ſhe, ſufficiency, power, reputation, and the reſt, to be conſidered as *conſtituent members*, ſo to ſpeak, of felicity? or, do they bear a relation to a *good* as their *principal part?*—I underſtand, ſaid I, what you propoſe to inveſtigate, and I am deſirous to hear it made out.—Attend, ſaid ſhe, and I will elucidate this matter. If all theſe things were members of felicity, they would differ from one another; for it is the property of members, or parts that differ from one another, conjunctly taken, to compoſe one body. But I have proved to you that theſe things are all the ſame, and do in no reſpect differ. They can by no means, therefore, be members of happineſs; for if they were, happineſs might be ſaid to be made up of one member, which is abſurd, and cannot poſſibly be.—All this is undoubtedly true, ſaid I; but I wiſh to hear the ſequel.—We know, replied ſhe, the things we have ſo often mentioned, do all of them bear a relation to *a good*. For if ſufficiency is deſired, it is deſired becauſe it is eſteemed a good: if power is ſought after, it is for the ſame reaſon; and upon this account likewiſe it is, that we deſire to obtain reſpect, glory, and pleaſure. Good then is the motive

tive and the end of all theſe wiſhes: for that which contains no good, either in reality or appearance, can never be deſired. On the contrary, things that are not in their nature good, are wiſhed for, becauſe they have the appearance of being real goods. Hence, good is juſtly eſteemed the motive, the foundation, and the end of all the deſires of mankind: but, that which is the cauſe of our deſiring any thing, is itſelf what we principally want. For example; if a man mounts his horſe on account of health, it is not ſo much the exerciſe of riding that he ſeeks, as its ſalutary effects. And as we have proved that theſe latter things are purſued from no other intention than to obtain happineſs, it is happineſs therefore only that is ſought after. Hence it clearly follows, that the good we have been reaſoning upon, and happineſs, differ in no reſpect, but are of one and the ſame ſubſtance.—I ſee no cauſe, ſaid I, to diſſent from your opinion.—But it has been proved, added ſhe, that God and true happineſs are one and the ſame thing.—It has ſo.—We may therefore certainly conclude, ſaid ſhe, that the ſubſtance of God is alſo the ſame with that of the ſupreme good.

O! hither come, ye mortals weak and vain!
Immers'd in grov'ling cares, by fond deſires
Led captive, whoſe opprobrious chains you mourn;
O hither come! come to this wond'rous ſource

Of goodneſs! here you'll find from weary toil
Sweet reſt, a ſovereign balm for every wound;
From Paſſion's gales, and Fortune's raging waves,
An harbour ſafe. Not all the gold that ſhines
On Hermus' banks, or rolls with Tagus' ſtream;
Not all the dazzling gems that Indian mines
Prolific yield, can clear the mental ſight
From vain deluſions. Ah! the glaring toys
Perplex the mind, and Reaſon's beams obſcure;
The ſhining bane, that mortals blind adore,
Ripens in gloomy caverns of the earth;
Baſe in its origin, of heaven-born minds
Unworthy the purſuit. Ah! ſpurn the earth,
And all its ſordid treaſures; ſoar aloft,
Upborn by Virtue, wing your way to heav'n:
Tranſcendent ſplendor, unexhauſted floods
Of glory, there, enraptur'd you'll behold:—
A light ineffable, to which compar'd,
The ſun's refulgent ray is weak and dim.

I am entirely of your opinion, ſaid I; for all this has been proved by infuperable arguments.—But how greatly would you value it, ſaid ſhe, did you fully know what this good is?—I ſhould value it infinitely, if I could at the ſame time attain to the knowledge of God, who is the ſovereign good.—I ſhall elucidate this matter, replied ſhe, by reaſons that are uncontrovertible, on condition that you allow me

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to make use of the principles formerly established.—To this I willingly consent.—Have I not made it evident, continued she, that the things which the majority of mankind so eagerly pursue, are not true and perfect goods; because they differ from one another, and because when one or more of them are wanting, the others cannot confer a complete and absolute good? Have I not likewise shewn you, that the true sovereign good is composed of an assemblage of all the goods, in such a manner, that if entire sufficiency is a property of this good, it must at the same time be endowed with power, and it must be also respectable, glorious, and abound with pleasure? Without this union, unless they are all considered as one and the same thing; is there any ground for ranking them among things desirable?—You explained this matter so well to me formerly, that I have no doubt about it. —Whilst these things differ from one another, added she, they are not goods; but as soon as they become *one*, they commence *goods*: that they are goods then, is it not owing to their participation of unity?—So it appears to be.—But will you grant, that every thing which is good, becomes such by the participation of what is good? Do you find in this any difficulty?—None, —For the same reason you must own, that unity and good are the same; for things that do not naturally differ in their effects, must necessarily

have the ſame ſubſtance.—This cannot be denied *.—Do you not perceive, continued ſhe, that every thing which exiſts is permanent, ſo long as it preſerves its unity; but in the inſtant it loſes this, it is diſſolved and annihilated?—How do you draw this concluſion?—In the animal creation, replied ſhe, as long as the ſoul and body are ſtrictly united and conjoined in one, this being is called *an animal*; but when this union is diſſolved by the ſeparation of the one from the other, the animal periſhes, and no longer exiſts. The human body furniſhes us with an inſtance of this; for whilſt the unity of its form ſubſiſts by the conjunction of its members, it re-

* Power, ſays Philoſophy, and the other characteriſticks of the ſovereign good, only become good by being united or by partaking of unity. Now, as they partake of unity, *e contra*, unity muſt partake of them; and as they are good, unity muſt alſo be good;—therefore unity and good are the ſame.

Boethius was a great admirer of Plato: there are many reaſonings of this kind to be found in the writings of that illuſtrious philoſopher.

Our author proceeds to prove, that every thing deſires unity, or to remain in a permanent ſtate. And the conſequences he draws from this reaſoning about unity and good, in p. 124, 125, are, Since all things deſire unity and good, and as unity is the ſame thing as good, hence what was proved before again follows, that all things deſire good; and hence, we may alſo conclude, that it is one and the ſame good or happineſs which all creatures purſue. Our Philoſopher farther infers, that it is the love of unity, or the deſire that all creatures have of exiſting, which fixes and renders every thing ſtable; for without this tendency or impulſe, all things in the univerſe would rove and float at random.

tains

tains the human figure; but when theſe parts are ſeparated, this unity is deſtroyed, and the body ceaſes to be what it was before. In like manner, were we to examine other things, we ſhould find that every thing ſubſiſts ſo long as its unity is preſerved; but when that is deſtroyed, the thing itſelf loſes its exiſtence.—I am perſuaded, replied I, that in every caſe we ſhould find this to be true. Is there any being, added ſhe, while it acts according to nature, that foregoes this deſire of exiſtence, and wiſhes corruption and diſſolution?—In contemplating the various tribes of animals, anſwered I, which are all of them endowed by nature with a power of willing and not willing, I cannot diſcover an individual among them, which of itſelf, and without conſtraint, renounces its deſire of ſelf-preſervation, and voluntarily haſtens to deſtruction; for every animal endeavours to preſerve itſelf, ſhuns death, and avoids every thing that is hurtful to it. But with regard to plants and trees, to all the vegetable kingdom, and to things totally inanimate, I am doubtful whether I ought to have the ſame opinion of them.—There is no cauſe, replied ſhe, why, in relation to theſe, you ought to entertain any doubt. Do you not always behold plants and trees ſpring up in ſoils moſt agreeable to their reſpective natures, where they are ſure to thrive, and are in no danger of periſhing ſoon? Some of them grow on plains, ſome on hills,

hills, others in marſhes; ſome are found ſprouting forth among rocks; barren ſands are congenial to others; and if you attempt to tranſplant any of them to a different ſoil, they quickly fade and die. To every thing that vegetates, nature gives what is proper for its ſubſiſtence, and takes care that it ſhould not periſh before its ordinary period. Need I tell you, that plants draw all their nouriſhment by their roots, which are as ſo many mouths hid in the earth, through which the ſap aſcending by the heart and bark, communicates vigour to the whole vegetable. And farther, is it not admirably contrived, that the ſofteſt and moſt tender part of plants, the pith, as it is called, is ſhut up in the middle of the trunk, and ſurrounded with hard and ſolid wood, which is covered with a coat of bark formed to endure the inclemencies of the weather, and to reſiſt all external injury? What care has not nature alſo taken to multiply plants, by multiplying their ſeeds! Who does not know that they are a kind of machines, which do not preſerve their exiſtence for a time only, but immortalize themſelves, as it were, by a ſucceſſive and perpetual generation? Things likewiſe totally inanimate, do not they alſo, for the ſame reaſon, incline to what is moſt ſuitable to them? Why does flame mount upwards by its levity, and the earth gravitate to the center by its weight, if it is not becauſe

cauſe theſe motions and tendencies are agreeable to their reſpective natures? Beſides, it is manifeſt, that as what is agreeable to the nature of a thing preſerves it; ſo what is contrary to its nature deſtroys it. Now, denſe bodies, ſuch as ſtones, whoſe particles ſtrongly cohere, reſiſt an eaſy ſeparation of parts; whereas the particles of fluids, ſuch as air and water, are eaſily ſeparated, and as eaſily re-united. But with regard to fire, it avoids all ſeparation of its parts, as is plain by the rapidity with which it every where ſpreads. You muſt obſerve, that I am not here ſpeaking of the voluntary motions of a rational ſoul, but only of the neceſſary operations of nature. Thus, for example, we digeſt our food without thinking of it, and draw our breath in ſleep, without our perception: for the deſire of exiſtence peculiar to animals, is not derived from an intellectual will, but from natural principles implanted in them. Hence it is, that the will, induced by powerful reaſons, ſometimes chuſes and embraces death, altho' nature dreads and abhors it; and, on the contrary, the ſame will frequently reſtrains men from immoderate indulgence in thoſe pleaſures, to which nature always ſtrongly impels them, as the only means of perpetuating the human race. The love therefore which every creature bears to itſelf, does not appear to be ſo much an effect of a volition of the mind, as of a natural impreſſion. For Providence hath implanted, in all things ſhe hath

hath created, an inſtinct for the purpoſe of ſelf-preſervation, which powerfully excites them to retain their beings, as long as by the courſe of nature they can: ſo that you cannot entertain the ſmalleſt doubt, but that every thing which exiſts, naturally deſires exiſtence, and avoids diſſolution.—I confeſs, ſaid I, that I now clearly perceive, what to me formerly appeared uncertain.—To proceed, continued ſhe; what deſires to ſubſiſt deſires alſo to retain its unity; for, if its unity is deſtroyed, it cannot continue to exiſt.—That, ſaid I, is very true.—All things then, added ſhe, deſire unity.—I agree with you they do.—But I proved before, that unity is the ſame thing as good.—You did ſo.—Thus all things, ſhe further added, deſire good; whence you may alſo conclude, that it is one and the ſame good which all creatures deſire.—It is impoſſible, ſaid I, to conceive any thing more true: for all things in the univerſe are either fixed by no relation, and finding themſelves deſtitute, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, of unity as their principle, rove and float at random without direction; or, if there is any thing to which they have a tendency and impulſe, it muſt be to the ſupreme and all-ſufficient good.—O my deareſt pupil, ſaid ſhe, how greatly do I rejoice that your mind clearly apprehends the truth I was ſo deſirous to teach you! You muſt likewiſe now diſtinctly perceive, what you ſaid you were ignorant of before.

—What was that?—The end, added ſhe, of all things; for the end of all things is what they purſue, and becauſe, as we have before ſhewn, this is good, we muſt neceſſarily hold it as an eſtabliſhed truth, that good is the end of every thing that exiſts.

With deep reſearch, whoſe ſtudious head explores
Thy treaſures, Truth, and anxious ſeeks to ſhun
Error's fallacious paths, let him arouſe
His ſlumbering pow'rs, and turn their piercing glance
Home on himſelf: the knowledge he purſues,
And toils with fruitleſs ſearch to find without,
In the receſſes of his mind deep-hid
He'll trace delighted. Truth, divinely bright,
Error's bewildering miſt will quick diſperſe,
And, powerful as the Sun's enliv'ning beam,
Cheer and illume his breaſt; for when this frame
Of cumbering clay involv'd the ſoul, and ſhed
Oblivion o'er its powers, its heav'n-born light
It damp'd, but quench'd not: principles of truth
Still copious lurk'd within, till wak'd to life,
They bloſſom by the cultivating hand
Of ſoul-enlarging ſcience, and bear fruit.
Were not, celeſtial Truth, thy gen'rous ſeeds
Implanted in the heart, ah! how could man
Diſtinguiſh wrong from right? ſay *this* is baſe,
And worthy *that?* Hence Plato, ſage ſublime,

This

This maxim teaches:—"All our knowledge flows
"From recollection of forgotten truths*."

I am entirely, said I, of Plato's opinion. You have now a second time made me recollect truths that had wholly escaped me; the remembrance of which was obliterated, first, by the contagious union of the body with the soul, and afterwards by the pressure of affliction under which I laboured.—If, said she, you will reflect upon the concessions you have already made, you will soon bring to your remembrance a very important truth, of which you lately acknowledged your ignorance.—What, I beseech you, is that?—The œconomy, replied she, or secret springs, by which the universe is conducted.—With regard to that, I own I confessed my ignorance; and although I have some idea of what you can say upon the subject, I wish to be more fully instructed in it from your own mouth.—Did you not acknowledge, a little while ago, added she, that there was not the smallest reason to doubt, but that the world

God governs the universe by his goodness, as a helm or rudder.

* It was Plato's opinion, that God at once created the souls of all mankind, who were to live in all ages of the world; that he distributed them among the celestial spheres, and taught them the nature of all things. From this creation of the souls of men before their bodies, Plato drew his opinion of *reminiscence*, or, that all our acquired knowledge proceeds only from remembrance: for if the soul existed before the body, and possessed all manner of knowledge; it follows, that all we learn through the course of our lives, is only the remembrance of what we had forgotten. Hence Socrates says in the *Phædon*; "that "to learn, is no other than to remember what had been before for-"gotten."

was directed by the wiſdom of God? I think ſo ſtill, ſaid I; and I ſhall never have any doubt of it; and, with your permiſſion, I will explain to you the reaſons that induce me to be of this opinion. A world, ſuch as this, conſiſting of different and diſcordant elements, would never have aſſumed its preſent form, unleſs there had been a wiſe Intelligence to unite and reduce them to order: and even after ſuch a conjunction, the jarring of ſuch oppoſite materials would have diſunited and ruined the beautiful fabrick made up of them, had not the ſame Intelligence upheld what he had ſo admirably connected. For undoubtedly, the order that reigns through Nature could not proceed in ſuch an eſtabliſhed courſe; could not diſplay ſuch regular and uniform motions, with regard to places, times, the production of effects, their duration and qualities, if there were not a Being to over-rule and direct this infinite variety of changes, without being liable to change himſelf: and (whatever he is, for he is above my comprehenſion) this Being, by whom all things are created, I call *God*; a name given him by all nations.—As your ſentiments upon theſe matters, ſaid ſhe, are now ſo juſt, there remains little more for me to do, than to leave you to the enjoyment of your felicity, and to diſmiſs you ſound and healthful into your own country. But let us firſt examine a little further

ther the principles we have eſtabliſhed.—Did we not place ſufficiency among the articles that conſtitute happineſs? And have we not agreed that true Felicity is no other thing than God himſelf? —We have ſo, ſaid I.—And does God, added ſhe, want no aſſiſtance from without, no foreign aid, in the government of the univerſe? Aſſuredly he does not; otherwiſe he would not be fully ſufficient in himſelf.—That, ſaid I, neceſſarily follows.—He directs therefore all things by himſelf alone. —It muſt be acknowledged he does.—But I have ſhown you that God is the ſupreme good.—I remember very well, you did.—He muſt therefore, continued ſhe, direct all things by good, ſince he governs them by himſelf, whom we have proved to be the ſupreme good. This then is the helm or rudder by which the great machine of this world is ſteadily and ſecurely conducted.—I am thoroughly ſatisfied, anſwered I, that it is; and I had ſome ſurmiſe, tho' but a ſlight one, of what you have now made clear to me.—I believe it, ſaid ſhe, for your faculties are much quicker in apprehending truth than they were. But what I am going to add will contribute not a little to your diſcovering it more perfectly.—What is that?—As we believe, ſaid ſhe, that God makes uſe of his goodneſs as a rudder to conduct this wonderful machine of Nature, and as I have taught you, that all things which exiſt have a natural tendency to good; can there be any doubt, then,

then, but that they all voluntarily ſubmit to his pleaſure, obey his nod, and give themſelves up without conſtraint to the rule of his all-directing hand? This is neceſſary, I anſwered; for otherwiſe, things, inſtead of being eſtabliſhed in concord and ſecurity, would be in a ſtate of diſcord and confuſion. — Is there any thing, which follows the dictates of Nature, that endeavours to counteract the will of God?—Nothing certainly.—But was any thing to attempt this, what could it do againſt him, whom we have proved to be ſupremely happy, and conſequently endowed with Almighty power?—Aſſuredly it could do nothing.—There is nothing then that has either inclination or power to reſiſt this ſupreme good?—I am perſuaded there is not.—It is this ſupreme good then, ſaid ſhe, that alone rules all things by unbounded power, and conducts them with amazing benignity. The ſolidity of your arguments, ſaid I, and the force and beauty with which they are expreſſed, delight me ſo much, and carry ſuch ſtrong conviction with them, that I am overwhelmed with ſhame, that I ever objected to them.—You have read in the fable, added ſhe, of the giants ſtorming heaven; of the repulſe they met with; and how they were puniſhed as they deſerved. But may we not now try to ſtrike our arguments for a little while againſt one another? perhaps, from their colliſion, ſome uſeful ſpark of truth may

break forth.—Do as you pleaſe.—No perſon, you own, can doubt of the power of God extending over all things.—No man in his ſenſes has any doubt of it.—There is nothing then which God cannot do, as his power is unlimited.—Nothing. —Can God then do evil?—No; by no means.— Then evil muſt be nothing *, ſince God cannot do it, who can do every thing.—Whilſt you give me, ſaid I, ſuch a wonderful idea of the myſterious circle of the Divine Felicity, you ſeem to ſport with me, and to bewilder me in a perplexing maze. For you firſt began with happineſs, and ſaid it was the ſovereign good; and that it reſided in the Supreme God, who was himſelf the ſovereign good, and the perfect Felicity; whence, you inferred that no perſon could be happy unleſs he became likewiſe a God. You added, that good was made up of the ſame ſubſtance whereof God and happineſs were compoſed, and that it was the object and the deſire of every thing in nature. You have alſo demonſtrated that God governs the world by his goodneſs, as by a helm; that all things voluntarily obey him, and that evil has no

* Epictetus ſays, as a mark is not ſet up for the ſake of miſſing the aim, ſo neither doth the nature of evil exiſt in the world.—Mrs. Carter illuſtrates this very ſenſibly in a note. Happineſs, the effect of virtue, ſays ſhe, is the mark which God hath ſet up for us to aim at. Our miſſing it, is no work of his; nor ſo properly any thing real, as a mere negative and failure of our own. Carter's Epictetus. Enchiridion, §. 27.

exiſtence.

exiſtence. Theſe truths you have eſtabliſhed, not by ſtrained and far-fetched arguments, but by ſtrong and natural reaſons; one proof conſtantly leading to, and confirming another.—It was never my intention, replied ſhe, to entertain you with deluſions. We have now, by the favour of God, executed the important work we propoſed, when we invoked his aſſiſtance: and I have made it clear to you, that it is a property eſſential to the Divine Nature, not to go out of itſelf, nor to admit any thing extraneous to its nature. Parmenides ſays of the Deity, he is like to *the round of a well-poliſhed ſphere*. It is this Supreme Intelligence, that moves the vaſt frame of the univerſe to its remoteſt circumference; whilſt he himſelf remains in the center, fixed, and immoveable. If in reaſoning upon theſe matters I have rather choſen to draw my arguments from the ſubjects themſelves, than to borrow them elſewhere, this ought not to ſurprize you, as you have learned from Plato, that there ought always to be a correſpondence, or to uſe his expreſſion *, a kind of alliance, betwixt the words, and the things expreſſed by them.

Happy the mortal who diſdains
The bondage of terreſtrial chains,

* This expreſſion is uſed in Plato's Timæus.

On contemplation's wings who ſoars,
And goodneſs' radiant ſource adores.
For his loſt bride, conſum'd with grief,
Orpheus from muſick ſought relief;
And pour'd forth ſuch enchanting ſong
As drew the waving woods along:
Attentive to his tale of woe,
The rolling rivers ceas'd to flow;
The feather'd tribes their ſongs forbear,
His ſweeter harmony to hear;
Tam'd by the magick of his lyre,
The ſavage race forego their ire;
The lion, careleſs now of prey,
Sees bounding Does around him play;
His rage ſubdu'd, the timid hare
Views the keen hound without a fear.
But vain was all his tuneful art;
Love's fire ſtill rages in his heart.
Thoſe numbers, which could all things tame,
Nothing allay'd their maſter's flame.
The pow'rs above th' unhappy Bard
Accus'd, as mercileſs and hard:—
And mad with anguiſh of his pain,
Deſcends to Pluto's gloomy reign.
His pulſe beats high, with nobler fire
He ſings, and ſtrikes his golden lyre;—
Exhauſting all th' harmonious art
His mother whilom did impart,
Each melting, captivating air,
Taught him by love, and by deſpair;

Whilſt

Whilſt the powers that rule below
Implore, in pity to his woe,
To abrogate the fates' decree,
And give him back Eurydice.
Hell's dreaded porter * ſtood amaz'd
At ſtrains ſo ſweet, and gap'd and gaz'd;
The furies, crown'd with ſnakes, who tear
And harrow guilty breaſts with fear,
Now, firſt relent, and pity know,
And down the tears unwilling flow:
A pauſe of reſt Ixion found;
His wheel ſtops at the powerful ſound;
Whilſt, Tityus, thy tormented breaſt
To rend, the rav'nous vulture ceas'd;
And Tantalus (his raging flame
Allay'd by ſong) forgets the ſtream.
He ſung;—the Bard's reſiſtleſs art
Touch'd Pluto's unrelenting heart.
I yield, ſays hell's tremendous lord,
I yield; his bride ſhall be reſtor'd,
Shall re-aſcend with him to life;
His ſong has won him back his wife.—
I grant her;—but theſe terms ordain,
Till he eſcapes from our domain
He ſhall not ſtop, nor turn his eye.—
But ah!—what terms can lovers tie?
Unruly Love no compacts awe,
His rapid will his only law.

* Cerberus.

When now with toil the hapleſs pair
Had well nigh reach'd the upper air,
Poor Orpheus! too, too weak of mind,
Stops, turns, and caſts a look behind:
He look'd—he ſaw—and was undone—
His dearer life for ever gone.

This tale inſtructive points to you,
Whoſe ſouls the *Good Supreme* purſue.
Ah!—if deluded with the glare
That thoughtleſs Vice and Folly wear,
(Like Orpheus impotent of mind)
You caſt a wiſhful look behind;
You loſe, from heav'n vouchſaf'd, the ray
To guide you to eternal day.

BOOK IV.

Boethius wonders why evil things happen to the good, and good things to the evil.——Philoſophy ſhows him that the good only are powerful, and the evil impotent.——That rewards are appointed for the former, and puniſhments for the latter. ——That the wicked who ſuffer chaſtiſement, are happier than if they had been exempted from puniſhment.——That it is better to ſuffer an injury, than to commit one.——Philoſophy afterwards defines what Providence is, and what Fate or Deſtiny.——She demonſtrates that all fortune, whether proſperous or adverſe, is good.

PHILOSOPHY, with ineffable grace and dignity, having poured forth theſe ſoft and enchanting ſtrains; I, not intirely diſburthened of the load of grief which had ſo miſerably oppreſſed me, interrupted her, as ſhe was continuing her diſcourſe. How ſhall I expreſs my gratitude to you, my only guide to the true light? All your diſcourſes have been full of comfort; not only from the divine

teſtimony they carry along with them, but from the irreſiſtible arguments you have employed, in eſtabliſhing the truths which they convey. From the oppreſſion of grief, theſe truths had eſcaped my remembrance; yet, as you obſerved, I was not wholly ignorant of them. Would you have me declare to you the principal cauſe of my trouble? It is to behold evil prevail, and paſs unpuniſhed in a world, which is under the abſolute direction of a Being who is goodneſs itſelf. This, you muſt own, is aſtoniſhing. But what ſtill ſtrikes me more is, that while Wickedneſs flouriſhes and preſcribes the law, Virtue is not only deprived of the reward ſhe merits, but is alſo trampled under foot by the baſe and profligate, and ſuffers the puniſhment due to impiety. You will ſurely agree with me, that it furniſhes matter for exhauſtleſs wonder and complaint, that ſuch things ſhould happen in a ſyſtem conducted by a Being all-knowing and all-powerful, and who certainly wills nothing but what is *the beſt*. —Undoubtedly, replied ſhe, it would be a matter not only of infinite wonder, but it would be altogether abſurd and monſtrous, if in the well-regulated family of ſo great a maſter, contemptible veſſels, as you ſuppoſe, ſhould be eſteemed precious, and precious veſſels deemed contemptible. But this is not ſo: for if the conſequences we have drawn, from the principles laid down, are indiſputable, you will be obliged to confeſs, that

Boethius wonders why evil things happen to the good, and good things to the evil.

that under the government of God, of whoſe reign I now ſpeak, the good are always powerful, and the evil, on the contrary, weak and contemptible; that vice is always puniſhed, and virtue conſtantly rewarded; that proſperity is ever the lot of the good, and adverſity inſeparable from the wicked. Theſe, and other comfortable truths of the like nature, which ſhall be farther illuſtrated, will remove the cauſe of your complaints, and reſtore your courage and magnanimity.—Having formerly, my deareſt pupil, exhibited to you a *picture* of true happineſs, and having ſhown you where ſhe reſides, and having premiſed every thing neceſſary for you to know, I ſhall now trace out the way that will lead you to your home. I will give your ſoul wings to ſoar aloft to the manſions on high; and, eaſed of every earthly oppreſſion, you ſhall, under my direction, by my road, and with my vehicles, return ſafe and healthful to your native country:

For I can furniſh wings to riſe
From ſordid earth, and mount the ſkies:
Th' exulting ſoul, upborn with *theſe*,
Heaven's loftieſt heights aſcends with eaſe.
She flies, more rapid than the wind,
And leaves the wand'ring clouds behind;
The gleaming meteors ſhe tranſcends;
Above the globe of air aſcends;

Then,

Then, through the fiery region ſprings,
As lightning quick, with daring wings:
Next to the planets' manſions ſoars,
And their extended rounds explores;
With Phœbus, glorious ſource of day!
She journeys in his radiant way:
A ſoldier now with Mars ſhe rides,
Now chill with aged Saturn glides;
She viſits ev'ry planet's dome,
O'er all the zodiac pleas'd to roam.
Perſiſting in her daring flight,
She ſoars to ſtill a nobler height;
Aſcends to heav'n's extremeſt ſphere,
Nor interrupts her ſwift career,
Till ſhe has reach'd the bliſsful plains
Of princes, where the Sovereign reigns;
Where the great Sire in ſtate reſides,
And firm his winged chariot guides;
With hand unerring holds the rein,
And rules the world's tumultuous ſcene.
If thus with vent'rous wing you riſe,
And re-aſcend your native ſkies,
Tracing your origin, you'll ſay,
"This is my country; here I'll ſtay;
"I'll ne'er forego theſe bleſt abodes,
"Theſe glorious manſions fit for gods."
And ſhould you from thoſe regions deign
To throw your eyes to earth again,
You'll pitying view the wretched fate
Of tyrants, thron'd in ſplendid ſtate,

Doom'd

Doom'd ne'er to reach thoſe ſeats of bliſs,
Exil'd from God and happineſs!

Philoſophy ſhows, that the good only are powerful, and the evil impotent.

Ah! ſaid I, your promiſes are great and delightful; and I make no doubt but you will fulfil them. Let me therefore intreat you, without delay, to ſatisfy the expectations you have raiſed.—You muſt firſt be convinced, replied ſhe, that the good are always poſſeſſed of power; whilſt the wicked are entirely deſtitute of it. By proving to you the one aſſertion, the other will appear plain: for ſince good and evil are contrary, if good is powerful, evil muſt be impotent; and if the impotence of evil is perſpicuous, the ſtrength and ſtability of good muſt be confeſſed. But that your conviction of the propoſition I have now aſſerted, may be the more complete, I ſhall proceed to prove it, from both theſe principles; eſtabliſhing the important truth, by arguments drawn ſometimes from one of theſe topicks, and ſometimes from the other.

In men, two things muſt concur to produce an action; the will, and the power. Both the one and the other are ſo neceſſary, that if either of them fail, no effect can be produced. A man cannot do any thing without the concurrence of his will; and the concurrence of his will is uſeleſs, if he is deſtitute of the power of accompliſhing his purpoſe. Hence it is, that if you ſee any perſon deſirous of obtaining what he cannot procure,

cure, you need not doubt but that he wants the power of obtaining it.—This is a matter ſo clear, ſaid I, that it is impoſſible to be denied.—And if you ſee another perſon do what he wills, can you doubt that he had the power to do it?—By no means.—But a man is eſteemed powerful, in reſpect of what he is able to do; and weak, in relation to what he is unable to perform.—That, I acknowledge, is true.—Do you remember, ſaid ſhe, what I formerly proved, that the will of man, however different the objects are which it purſues, hath no other end in view but happineſs.—I remember diſtinctly this has been demonſtrated.—But do you recollect, it has been ſhown, that happineſs is the ſupreme good of man, and that there is not one who is not deſirous of this good, ſince all purſue happineſs?—No, I cannot be ſaid to recollect it; for it has been ſo firmly rivetted in my memory, that it is always preſent.—All men, therefore, ſaid ſhe, the good as well as the bad, without diſtinction, endeavour to acquire good.—Undoubtedly they do.—But is it not true likewiſe, that men by obtaining good become good?—It is an unqueſtionable truth.—Do good men then obtain what they deſire?—I think they do.—But if evil men obtain the good, which they purſue, they can no longer be evil.—They cannot, ſurely.—Since then both the one and the other purſue good, which the good only acquire, it appears inconteſtable, that the good

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are powerful, and that the wicked are impotent.—None can doubt the truth of this, but ſuch as either know not the differences of things, or are incapable of comprehending the force of any reaſoning.—Again, ſaid ſhe, If there be two Beings, who have the ſame end in view, and one of them accompliſhes his purpoſe by making uſe of natural means, whilſt the other has it not in his power to purſue that method, but follows a courſe not indicated by nature, and does not therefore attain his end, but only imitates him who has attained it; which of theſe two, in your opinion, is the moſt powerful?—Altho' I have ſome idea of your meaning, ſaid I, I beg you would make it clear by an example.—You cannot deny, then, that the motion of walking is natural to man?—I cannot.—Neither can you have any doubt, but that walking is the natural office of the feet?—I can have no doubt about that.—If therefore a perſon who is able to uſe his feet, walks with them, whilſt another, who is deprived of this power, creeps upon his hands, and endeavours to imitate him who walks; which of theſe perſons do you think has the moſt power?—Go on, if you pleaſe, ſaid I; for no man can doubt, but that he who is in poſſeſſion of his natural faculties, is more powerful than the perſon who is deprived of them.—But the ſupreme good, continued ſhe, is the end which the good and bad have equally in view: now the good purſue this end in

the way pointed out by nature, by a courſe of virtue; whilſt the bad ſtrive to acquire this ineſtimable prize, by gratifying a variety of corrupt deſires, which ſurely is not the natural way to procure it. Do you differ from me in opinion?—No, anſwered I; the concluſion you have drawn is juſt. But from what I formerly granted, the good muſt neceſſarily be endowed with power, and the bad, on the contrary, deſtitute of it.—You go before me, ſaid ſhe, and have prevented me in the conſequence I was about to draw; and it is a good ſign, and gives hope to the phyſician, when Nature aſſiſts, when ſhe exerts herſelf, and reſiſts the malady. But as I ſee you ſo quick in apprehending my arguments, I ſhall not ſpread and unfold them ſo much, but ſhall draw them up in a cloſer form, in what is to follow.—Behold then the great imbecillity of the wicked, who cannot even compaſs the end to which their natural diſpoſition leads them, and to which they are in a great meaſure, as it were, compelled! But how much greater would it have been, if Nature, which enlightens them, had refuſed an aid which is ſo powerful, and almoſt irreſiſtible. Conſider attentively, I pray you, to what extremity the impotence of ſuch men is reduced. For they are not trifles; they are not frivolous prizes which they deſire, and in vain purſue; but it is for the chief good, the moſt eſſential of all things, that they languiſh; and though to obtain this, they labour night and day,

day, yet they miſerably fail of ſucceſs; whilſt the power of the virtuous, in acquiring this deſirable object, is eminent and indiſputable. But to return to our former illuſtration: If a perſon who walks on foot, has gone ſo far that he has no more country to traverſe, you eſteem him very powerful in walking: you muſt therefore certainly allow that man to be extremely powerful, who has obtained the end of his wiſhes, the poſſeſſion of that good beyond which nothing is to be deſired. As this is the caſe, it plainly follows, that the wicked are totally deſtitute of power. For why do they forſake virtue, and purſue vice? Doth this behaviour proceed from their ignorance of good? But is there a greater mark of weakneſs than to be involved in the wretched darkneſs of ignorance? Or, do they know the road they ought to purſue, but are led aſtray from it by their paſſions (as the luxurious, for inſtance, by intemperance), becauſe they have not firmneſs enough to reſiſt the temptation of vice? Does not this alſo exhibit the higheſt degree of weakneſs? Or, finally, do they knowingly and willingly give up with virtue, and ruſh into wickedneſs? If they behave thus, they not only ceaſe to be powerful, but they even ceaſe to exiſt: for Beings who neglect to purſue the end common to all things that exiſt, ceaſe in reality to be. You are ſurprized, perhaps, to hear me aſſert, that the wicked, who are the majority of the human race, have no exiſtence:

exiſtence: nothing however is more true. That the wicked are bad, I do not deny: but that they can with propriety be ſaid to exiſt, is what I will not admit. You may call a carcaſe a dead man, but you cannot call it properly a man; ſo I grant, that the vicious are profligate men; but that they have a real exiſtence, I cannot acknowledge: for a thing exiſts only ſo long as it preſerves its rank, its nature, and conſtitution; but, when it loſes theſe, it ceaſes then to be, as it is deprived of what is eſſential to its being. But you may alledge, that the wicked have certainly a power to act. This is what I will not conteſt. But this power is an effect of weakneſs, not of ſtrength. They can do evil, that is true; but this they could not do, if they had retained the power of doing good; and their capacity to do evil, demonſtrates ſtill more evidently that they can do nothing. For ſince evil, as we have before proved, is nothing *; it is therefore clear, that while the wicked can do evil only, they can do nothing.—This, ſaid I, is abundantly perſpicuous. — That you may comprehend wherein conſiſts the excellence of this power with which the virtuous are endowed, you ought to recollect, what was ſo lately made evident, that nothing is more powerful than the ſovereign good. —This, I told her, I remembered.—But can the ſovereign good, ſaid ſhe, do evil?—No ſurely,

* Page 130.

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it cannot.—And can any perſon think that men can do all things?—No man in his ſenſes can think ſo.—But men may do evil.—Devoutly do I wiſh they could not.—Since then, continued ſhe, he who can do good, can do every thing; but he who can do evil only, has not this deſirable power; it is manifeſt, that ſuch as can do evil, have leſs power than they that can do good. To this let me add, what has been formerly proved, that power is of the number of the things to be deſired; and that all things deſirable have a relation to that good, which conſtitutes the perfection of our nature. But the power of committing wickedneſs can have no relation to that good, therefore it is not to be deſired; but as all power is deſirable, it is evident that the liberty to do evil is not real power. From the whole of this reaſoning, it clearly follows, that the good only are endowed with power; whilſt weakneſs, nay entire impotence, is what alone falls to the ſhare of the wicked. The opinion of Plato is hereby alſo verified, that the wiſe only have the power to do what they deſire*: the wicked may indeed do what their

* This opinion of Plato is taken from the Gorgias.—In which Socrates ſays to Polus—"I maintain, O Polus, that the orators and "the tyrants, as I told you formerly, poſſeſſed in their cities but a very "circumſcribed power; for they did nothing, ſo to ſpeak, which they "were deſirous to perform, although they did what appeared *beſt* to "them in their own opinion."

their wayward fancies dictate, but can by no means accompliſh their deſires. They may ſtrive to gratify their paſſions, in view to procure to themſelves the good which they wiſh; but this good they cannot poſſibly acquire, becauſe impiety and vice can never conduct to happineſs.

Monarchs with wonder we behold,
With dazzling diadems crown'd,
Shining with purple and with gold,
With guards encircled round.

Exalted on their lofty thrones,
With boundleſs power elate,
They bend the world beneath their frowns,
And what they will is fate.

Could we their hidden breaſts explore,
Where reſtleſs paſſions rend,
Deceiv'd with glaring pomp no more,
Soon would our wonder end.

For ah!—theſe lords of human kind
Are captives led at will,
Of headſtrong tryants fierce and blind,
That lord it o'er them ſtill.

Plato proves likewiſe in the ſame treatiſe, and in his Alcibiades, that the wicked are not endowed with power; that it is better to ſuffer an injury than to commit one; that the good and the wiſe are alone happy; that the wicked are always miſerable, but that they are ſtill more ſo, if they eſcape unpuniſhed.

All the above-mentioned points Boethius handles and diſcuſſes in this ivth Book, very ingeniouſly and acutely.

Luſt,

Luſt, venom'd ſource of foul deſires,
Inflames their madden'd ſouls;
Here Malice lights his vengeful fires,
Here Rage his billows rolls:

For more, here reſtleſs Av'rice craves;
Here Envy ſtings the heart;
Succeſsleſs Hope here loudly raves,
And leaves a galling ſmart.

With tort'ring inmates thus diſtreſt,
Why envy we the great?—
Depriv'd of freedom, void of reſt,
How wretched is their ſtate!

Rewards are appointed for the good, and puniſhments for the wicked.

Do you not then perceive, continued ſhe, with what infamy vice is diſgraced and ſullied; and with what a luſtre virtue beams forth? This is a certain proof that the good never go unrewarded, and that the bad never eſcape without puniſhment: for in whatever a perſon does, he propoſes to himſelf an end, and that end is in reality the reward he purſues. Thus they who enter the liſts, and engage in the race, have for their end the crown, which is the prize contended for. But we have already ſhown that happineſs is the good ſought after, as the end of all that a man does. All the human race therefore propoſe to themſelves the ſame good, as the reward of their actions. Now this good

is inſeparable from the virtuous, ſince no perſon can properly be called virtuous who is deſtitute of it; conſequently, virtue can never want its reward. Let the wicked then rage as much as they pleaſe againſt the wiſe man, they ſhall never be able to deprive him of his crown, nor to blaſt it upon his head; for the wickedneſs of another can never tarniſh that inherent luſtre which is natural to virtue. If a man hugs himſelf in the poſſeſſion of any advantage which he has received from another, he may be ſtript of it, either by the perſon who beſtowed it upon him, or by others. But as the reward of the virtuous is derived from virtue alone, a man cannot loſe this reward, unleſs he ceaſes to be virtuous. Finally; ſince a reward is deſired, becauſe it is ſuppoſed to be a good, can we ſuppoſe, that he who poſſeſſes the good itſelf is deprived of the recompence? But what reward does he enjoy? The faireſt, certainly, and the richeſt of all recompences. Recall to your memory the excellent corollary which I formerly deduced, and attend to what flows from it. As the ſupreme good is happineſs, it follows, that all good men, for the very reaſon that they are good, become happy; but if they are happy, they muſt of neceſſity alſo become Gods. Thus divinity is the recompence of the good; a reward which no time can impair, no power can diminiſh, no wickedneſs can obſcure. As matters are thus conſtituted,

conſtituted, no wiſe man can entertain a doubt, but that puniſhment likewiſe is inſeparable from the wicked: for good being as oppoſite to evil, as puniſhment is to reward; it is apparent, that if there be a recompence for good, there muſt, on the contrary, be a chaſtiſement for evil: and as the reward of the virtuous is virtue herſelf, ſo vice is the puniſhment of the vicious. But whoever is chaſtiſed with a puniſhment, acknowledges that he is afflicted with an evil. If therefore the wicked did rightly underſtand themſelves, they would never ſuppoſe that they are exempted from puniſhment, when vice, the worſt of all evils, not only afflicts them, but pollutes and entirely depraves them. But let us contemplate the puniſhment of the wicked, as it ſtands in oppoſition to the reward of the good. You have been taught lately by me *, that every thing which exiſts preſerves the unity which conſtitutes its being, and that every thing which preſerves this, is good; conſequently, every thing which exiſts muſt alſo appear to be good. Hence it again follows, that every thing which ſtrays from what is good, ceaſes to be: the wicked therefore muſt ceaſe to be what they were: but that they were formerly men, their human ſhape, which ſtill remains, teſtifies. By degenerating into wickedneſs, then, they muſt ceaſe to be men. But as virtue alone

* Pages 119, 120.

can exalt a man above what is human; ſo it is on the contrary evident, that vice, as it diveſts him of his nature, muſt ſink him below humanity: you ought therefore by no means to conſider him as a man whom vice has rendered vicious. Tell me—What difference is there betwixt a wolf * who lives by rapine, and a robber, whom the deſire of another's wealth ſtimulates to commit all manner of violence? Is there any thing that bears a ſtronger reſemblance to a wrathful dog who barks at paſſengers, than a man whoſe dangerous tongue attacks all the world? What is liker to a fox, than a cheat, who ſpreads his ſnares in ſecret to undermine and ruin you? to a lion, than a furious man, who is always ready to devour you? to a deer, than a coward, who is afraid of his own ſhadow? to an aſs, than a mortal, who is ſlow, dull, and indolent? to the birds of the air, than a man volatile and inconſtant? and what, in fine, is a debauchee, who is immerſed in the loweſt ſenſual gratifications, but a hog who wallows in the mire? Upon the whole, it is an unqueſ-

* Thus Epictetus in Arrian: By means of this animal kindred, ſome of us, deviating towards it, become like wolves, faithleſs, inſidious, and miſchievous; others, like lions, wild, and ſavage, and untamed; but moſt of us foxes, and wretches even among brutes: for what elſe is a ſlanderous and ill-natured man, than a fox, or ſomething yet more wretched and mean? See then and take heed that you do not become ſuch wretches.

Mrs. Carter's Tranſlation, B. I. ch. iii. ſect. 2.

tionable

tionable truth, that a man who forſakes virtue, ceaſes to be a man; and as it is impoſſible that he can aſcend in the ſcale of beings, he muſt of neceſſity degenerate and ſink into a beaſt.

Ulyſſes' wand'ring ſails, long toſt
By ſtorms, arriv'd on that fam'd coaſt
Where, offspring of the god of day,
Circe the fair bears ſovereign ſway.
The dame the wand'rers entertains
With magic draughts and ſoothing ſtrains;
Chang'd by her wonder-working hand,
Which wide o'er nature bears command,
Ulyſſes' mates, her wond'ring gueſts,
The faces wear and forms of beaſts;—
The lion's awful form and roar
While one aſſumes, one grunts a boar;
Chang'd to a wolf, while this laments
His fate,—in howls he pours his plaints;
Whilſt that a tyger's aſpect wears,
But mild and void of rage appears.
Th' Arcadian god * no ſooner found
His hero in her fetters bound,
But ſtrait he breaks her potent charm,
And ſets Ulyſſes free from harm.
But ah! the ſage's headlong crew
Their treach'rous bev'rage ſtill renew,
Till, turn'd to ſwine, they change their food,
And roam for acorns in the wood:

* *Mercury.*

Of man's fair form and ſpeech bereft,
No trace of former likeneſs left,
Their ſouls unalter'd 'wail their fate,
Baſe brutal forms to animate.
But weak the power in herbs that dwells;
Bounded the dame's enchanting ſpells;
O'er matter tho' their force prevails,
To change the heav'n-born ſoul it fails;
Entire remains th' immortal part,
Beyond the reach of magic art.
More potent Vice, and full of harms,
More to be fear'd than Circe's charms;
Her poiſon quenches Reaſon's ray,
And ſteals the man entire away;
Sinks him to brute in heart and head—
The human form unaltered.

I agree with you, ſaid I, and acknowledge that the vicious are not unjuſtly called beaſts; for though they preſerve the human form, with regard to the faculties of the ſoul they are really metamorphoſed into brutes. But I heartily wiſh that their wicked and ferocious minds, which burn with rage to annoy the good, had not the power of hurting them.—The wicked have no ſuch power, replied ſhe, as I ſhall ſhow you in a little time. But if this power, which they are ſuppoſed to have, and of which you ſo heavily complain, were taken from them, they would be relieved of the greateſt part of their puniſhment: for

for certain it is, though it may appear incredible to many, that the wicked are more unhappy when they can accompliſh their evil deſigns, than when they want the power to perpetrate them: becauſe, if it is an unhappineſs to will evil, it is ſtill a greater to have the power to execute it; for, if bad men were diveſted of this power, their wicked deſires would languiſh without effect. Since miſery, then, is annexed to the will, and to the power of doing evil, and alſo to the accompliſhment of it, it neceſſarily follows, that they who have the will and the power to do evil, and who actually commit it, are trebly miſerable.—This I muſt confeſs, ſaid I; but at the ſame time I earneſtly wiſh that the wicked were ſpeedily delivered from this miſery; I mean, that they were deprived of the power of doing hurt.—They ſhall be ſtript of this power, added ſhe, ſooner perhaps than you would wiſh, or than they themſelves imagine: for there is nothing that glides away in the narrow bounds of human life, however ſlow and imperceptible its progreſs may be, which to an immortal ſoul can appear to have a very long duration. The moſt flattering hopes of the wicked, the lofty edifices of their criminal projects, are often overturned by unforeſeen accidents. But the ſubverſion of theſe puts a ſtop to the progreſs of their miſery; for this good reaſon, that if wickedneſs renders a man miſerable, he muſt become more and more ſo the longer

longer he continues wicked; and ſuch perſons I ſhould believe to be infinitely miſerable, if death did not come and put a period to their wickedneſs: for if the conſequence I have drawn from the unhappineſs of the wicked is true, it is evident, that a miſery which is eternal, is nothing leſs than an infinite miſery.—This conſequence, ſaid I, appears to me wonderful, and difficult to be aſſented to; nevertheleſs I muſt own that it is perfectly conformable to what has been eſtabliſhed. You think juſtly, replied ſhe; becauſe he who eſteems it difficult to aſſent to a concluſion, ought either to ſhow that the premiſes are falſe, or that the conſequence is unfairly drawn; for if the premiſes are eſtabliſhed, and the concluſion fairly deduced, he can have no reaſon to reject it.

The wicked who ſuffer chaſtiſement, are happier than if they had been exempted from puniſhment.

But what I am now going to communicate to you is not leſs ſurprizing, though it neceſſarily flows from the ſame premiſes.—What is that I pray?—That the wicked, who ſuffer the chaſtiſement which they merit, are happier than they would have been, if juſtice had allowed their crimes to have eſcaped unpuniſhed. To convince you of this, I will not confine myſelf to common and popular arguments; that puniſhment corrects bad morals; that the fear of chaſtiſement leads back to the right way; and that the ſufferings of the wicked deter from vice: but, leaving theſe things entirely out of the queſtion, I am perſuaded that the wicked, whoſe crimes remain

main unpuniſhed, become much more unhappy in another way.—In what way do you mean?—Have we not agreed, added ſhe, that the good are happy, and the wicked miſerable?—We have.—But if you mix ſome good with the miſery of a man, will not he be more happy than another whoſe miſery is pure, entire, and without any mixture of good?—Certainly he will.—Again—If the unhappineſs of the latter, who is deprived of every good, is encreaſed by additional miſery, does he not become much more wretched than he whoſe diſtreſs is allayed by the participation of ſome good?—Unqueſtionably he does.—The wicked, then, continued ſhe, even when they are puniſhed, have a degree of good annexed to their condition, to wit, the puniſhment itſelf, which cannot be an evil, becauſe it is juſt; and, on the contrary, when they eſcape puniſhment, their miſery is encreaſed by another evil, which is this very exemption from puniſhment: for did not you yourſelf confeſs, that this exemption was an evil?—I own I did.—The wicked, then, ſaid ſhe, are much more unhappy when they enjoy an unmerited impunity, than when they ſuffer a chaſtiſement which they deſerve: but that it is juſt to puniſh the wicked, and unjuſt that they ſhould eſcape with impunity, is a truth which cannot be denied.—Nobody, ſaid I, denies it.—Nor can any man deny, added ſhe, but that every thing which is juſt, is good; and that, on the contrary,

contrary, every thing which is unjuſt, is evil.—This, ſaid I, neceſſarily follows, from the concluſions formerly deduced. But tell me, I beſeech you; Is there any puniſhment for ſouls after death?—Undoubtedly, replied ſhe; and great ones too. I am of opinion, however, that they are inflicted for different purpoſes; ſome with rigour to puniſh *, and others with clemency to purify and meliorate. But it is not my deſign at preſent to enlarge upon this ſubject. I have been employed hitherto in proving that the power of the wicked, which appeared to you the moſt ſhameful thing in the univerſe, is, in reality, nothing; that their wickedneſs never eſcapes unpuniſhed,

* Commentators imagine that Boethius here acknowledges, not only as a chriſtian, but a catholick, that ſome wicked men are condemned to eternal puniſhments; whilſt others, whoſe wickedneſs is not ſo great, are purified and refined by ſufferings. But, as it is Philoſophy who is made to deliver her opinion, it is more probable that ſhe here expreſſes the ſentiments of the Platoniſts or of the Pythagoreans, which were, that the ſouls of ſome perſons were ſo impious, that they could not be cleanſed from their pollution by any purgation whatever, and that they were therefore condemned to eternal puniſhments; but that others, whoſe crimes were not ſo heinous, after undergoing a variety of ſufferings, were admitted to the pleaſures of elyſium. Thus Virgil, in his 6th Eneid:

Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
Supplicia expendunt; aliæ panduntur inanes
Suſpenſæ ad ventos; aliæ ſub gurgite vaſto
Infectum eluitur ſcelus, aut exuritur igni;
Quiſque ſuos patimur manes; exinde per amplum
Mittimur Elyſium, et pauci læta arva tenemus.

The

puniſhed, notwithſtanding the diſagreeable idea you entertained to the contrary: that their liberty to do evil, which you wiſhed might ſoon come to an end, is not of long duration: that the longer it continues, they are ſo much the more miſerable; and that if it were to continue for ever, their miſery would be infinite: that, in fine, if the wicked eſcaped by an unjuſt exemption from puniſhment, they would be more unhappy than if they were chaſtiſed according to their demerits; and conſequently, that they are never more rigorouſly puniſhed, than when they are ſuppoſed not to ſuffer for their crimes.—I have attended carefully to your reaſoning, ſaid I, and it appears to me convincing and concluſive: but if I were to take the opinions of mankind upon theſe ſubjects, your arguments would be ſo far from gaining their aſſent, that it would be difficult to find a perſon that would liſten to them.—I am of your opinion, replied ſhe: for mankind are ſo accuſtomed to darkneſs, that they cannot fix their

The relicks of inveterate vice they wear,
And ſpots of ſin obſcene in every face appear;
For this are various penances enjoin'd,
And ſome are hung to bleach upon the wind;
Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the ruſt expires;
All have their manes, and thoſe manes bear;
The few, ſo cleans'd, to the abodes repair,
And breathe in ample fields the ſoft elyſian air.

DRYDEN.

eyes

eyes upon the light of a truth which dazzles them. They are like thoſe birds that ſee clearly by night, but whoſe weak ſight cannot bear the ſplendor of day: whilſt they pay no regard to the eſtabliſhed order of things, but conſider only the gratification of their own paſſions; it is not wonderful, that they ſhould think there is a happineſs in the liberty of doing evil, and in exemption from puniſhment.—But as to you, my pupil, do you attend to the law, which is engraved upon your own heart *. If you conform your mind to what is good, you need not be anxious about a reward from the hand of a judge;—you have by your behaviour become one of the moſt excellent of human kind. But if you purſue evil, you

* The true law, ſays Cicero, is right reaſon, conformable to the nature of things; conſtant, eternal, diffuſed thro' all; which calls us to duty by commanding, deters us from ſin by forbidding; which never loſes its influence with the good, nor ever preſerves it with the wicked. This cannot poſſibly be over-ruled by any other law, nor abrogated in the whole, or in part; nor can we be abſolved from it, either by the ſenate or by the people; nor are we to ſeek any other comment or interpreter of it, but itſelf; nor can there be one law at Rome, another at Athens; one now, another hereafter; but the ſame eternal, immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common maſter and governor of all, God. He is the inventor, propounder, enacter of the law; and whoever will not obey it, muſt firſt renounce himſelf and throw off the nature of man: by doing which, he will ſuffer the greateſt puniſhment, tho' he ſhould eſcape all the other torments which are commonly believed to be prepared for the wicked.

Fragment of Cicero from Book III. of his Republick, in Lactantius. Tranſlated by Dr. Middleton.—Life of Cicero, vol. iii. p. 351, 352.

This valuable fragment of Cicero is an excellent deſcription of conſcience, or the moral ſenſe.

need

need no other chaſtiſement;—you have degraded yourſelf into a lower order of beings. Thus; if with a fixed attention, and baniſhed every thought beſides, you contemplate alternately the radiant heaven, and ſordid earth; by the very nature of viſion, you will now ſuppoſe yourſelf exalted to the ſtars, and anon involved in the clay.—I know that the vulgar, continued ſhe, do not reflect upon theſe things. What then? ſhall we take them as models, whom before we affirmed to reſemble the beaſts? If a perſon deprived of ſight, and who had even forgot that he ever had it, ſhould aſſert that he has every human faculty in perfection; ſhould we be ſo weak as to believe, that ſuch as retain the uſe of their eyes were become blind? But as the vulgar reject all the foregoing reaſoning, they will alſo refuſe their aſſent to what I am now going to propoſe, tho' it is ſupported by arguments equally ſtrong and concluſive; to wit, that perſons who commit an injury are more unhappy than thoſe who ſuffer one.—I am extremely deſirous, ſaid I, to hear you prove this point.—Do you deny, replied ſhe, that every wicked man deſerves puniſhment?—No, I do not.—And you are ſatisfied, from a great variety of proofs, that the wicked are miſerable?—Unqueſtionably they are.—Again:—You have no doubt but that every man who merits puniſhment is miſerable?—To this I agree.—But if you were

appointed a judge, on which of the two would you inflict puniſhment; on him who hath committed, or on him who hath ſuffered the injury? —I would not heſitate a moment in puniſhing the offender, in reparation of the injury done to the party offended.—But ſtill you would reckon the injuring perſon more unhappy than he who had ſuffered the wrong?—I certainly would.—Thus then, added ſhe, for theſe reaſons, and for others which flow from the ſame principle, that vice, from the baſeneſs of its nature, renders men miſerable; it is evident, that when an injury is done to any man, it is the cauſe of miſery to the doer *, but not to the ſufferer. But our pleaders at the bar, continued ſhe, are of a different opinion, as they ſtrive to excite the compaſſion of the judges in favour of thoſe who have ſuffered cruelty and oppreſſion, whereas pity is more juſtly due to the oppreſſors; who ought therefore to be conducted to judgment, as the ſick are to the phyſician, not by angry, but by friendly and compaſſionate accuſers, that they may be cured of

It is better to ſuffer an injury, than to commit one.

* It is no paradox to ſay, that by nature man is gentle, and ſocial, and faithful.—How then is it a parodox to ſay, that when he is whipt, or impriſoned, or beheaded, he is not hurt? If he ſuffers nobly, doth not he come off even the better, and a gainer? But he is the perſon hurt, who ſuffers the moſt miſerable and ſhameful evils, who inſtead of a man, becomes a wolf, a viper, or a hornet.

Mrs. Carter's Arrian, B. IV. c. i. ſ. 13.

their

their vices by the phyſick of chaſtiſement. I am, therefore, of opinion, that no pleaders ought to be employed to defend the guilty. I either wiſh them to relinquiſh it altogether, or to join the party of the accuſers; for I cannot diſcover how they may be uſeful in any other way. Were it poſſible for the wicked to obtain a ſlight view of the charms of that virtue which they have forſaken; and could they but perſuade themſelves, that, by paſſing through the diſcipline of chaſtiſement, they ſhould be purified from the ſtains of vice, and reſtored to virtue; they ſurely would not conſider the diſcipline as an evil, neither would they implore the aſſiſtance of an advocate to defend them; but, without heſitation, they would ſubmit themſelves to the will of their judges and their accuſers. Hence it is the wiſe are not ſuſceptible of hatred: for none but a madman hates the good; and to hate the wicked is fully as irrational; for their propenſity to vice is really as much a diſeaſe of the mind, as any of the ordinary human diſtempers is of the body. Now as a perſon ſuffering under a diſeaſe is not an object of reſentment, but claims our compaſſion; we have ſtill more reaſon to pity, and not to hate thoſe unhappy perſons over whom vice, the moſt deplorable of all diſtempers, has gained the dominion.

Deluded men, your breaſts what frenzies ſway,
With impious hand to cut life's brittle thread?
If death you wiſh, intent to ſeize his prey,
Death ceaſeleſs urges on his rapid ſteed.

To ſavage beaſts a helpleſs prey expos'd,
To lions, tygers, and the foaming boar;
With deadly ills on every ſide inclos'd,
Your ſwords why ſtain you in your own warm gore?

What demon drives you, tho' you differ wide
In manners, and in judgment diſagree,
Headlong to plunge in war's tumultuous tide,
And furious urge each other's deſtiny?

Ye greatly err—your feuds compoſe, and ceaſe;
Ceaſe, ſavage men, to riot thus in blood:
To merit give its due; delight in peace;
Pity the wicked, and revere the good.

Here I interpoſed, and ſaid, I now plainly perceive the nature of that happineſs and of that miſery which are eſſentially and inſeparably annexed to the virtues and the vices of the deſerving and the baſe. But in this fortune, in which the vulgar put ſuch a value, I clearly diſcover a mixture of good and evil: for no wiſe man ever preferred exile, indigence, and ignominy, to the poſſeſſion of riches, honour, and power, and

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to the happineſs of living with eſteem in the boſom of his own country: and wiſdom really ſhines with a greater luſtre when her votaries are at the head of a ſtate, and communicate their happy influence to the people under their direction; and particularly, when impriſonment, tortures, and the other puniſhments ordained by the laws, are employed only for the chaſtiſement of bad citizens, for whom they were at firſt inſtituted. Why then ſhould things undergo ſo unnatural a change? Why ſhould the worthy ſuffer the puniſhment due to crimes, and the profligate rob the virtuous of their rewards? I am greatly amazed at theſe irregularities, and I am extremely deſirous to learn from you the reaſon of ſo unjuſt a diſtribution. I ſhould be indeed leſs ſurprized, if I could perſuade myſelf that chance had the direction, and was the cauſe of all this confuſion in the univerſe. But I am overwhelmed with aſtoniſhment when I reflect, it is God that directs all events; and though he often beſtows deſirable things upon the good, and inflicts things grievous upon the wicked; yet, on the contrary, he frequently afflicts the good, and diſpenſes to the wicked all that they wiſh. So that I cannot comprehend, unleſs you explain it to me, what difference there is betwixt the effects of his providence, and the operations of blind Fortune.—It is not at all ſurprizing, replied ſhe, as you do not know wherein the order eſtabliſhed

Boethius complains of the evil that prevails in the world.

in the univerſe conſiſts, that you ſhould imagine you ſee irregularities in it, and things done without deſign: but though you be ignorant of the reaſon of ſo excellent an order, never entertain a doubt, whilſt a good governor preſides over the world, but every thing is rightly conducted, and as it ought to be.

Round the pole, in fair array,
Circulates the Bear his way;
Slow Boötes drives his wain
Nightly o'er th' etherial plain,
And his courſe compleated nigh,
Dips a while in nether ſky:
Stare the crowd, and ſtrive to gueſs
The cauſe of theſe appearances!
Cynthia's orb at full, grows pale,
Shadows dark her diſk aſſail;
Stars, her ſplendor hid before,
Stud the heav'n's wide concave o'er;
Struck the vulgar with alarms!
Labouring moon to free from charms,
Rend with ſounding braſs the air—
Weary heav'n with ceaſeleſs pray'r.
None admire when Boreas raves,
And the tempeſts raiſe the waves;
Wonder none, when Sol's warm ray
Melts the hills of ſnow away!
Open here the cauſes lie,
Perſpicuous to every eye;

Things

Things whoſe cauſes are not plain,
Vex and diſcompoſe the brain;
Each appearance rare or new,
Grov'ling minds with terror view.
Sloth unthinking drive away,
Illume the mind with ſcience' ray;
Fear and wonder ſoon will ceaſe,
And man poſſeſs his ſoul in peace.

We ought undoubtedly, ſaid I, to baniſh ſloth, and ſtrive to increaſe in knowledge. But as it belongs to you to diſcover the moſt ſecret cauſes, and to unveil things wrapt up in darkneſs, I beſeech you to deliver me from my preſent perplexity, and to explain the myſtery I mentioned to you.—You propoſe to me, replied ſhe with a ſmile, the moſt intricate of all queſtions, which I am afraid all our arguments will not be ſufficient to ſolve: for the ſubject is of ſuch a nature, that when we have lopped off one difficulty, like the heads of the hydra, innumerable others immediately ſpring up; ſo that there would be no end of them, did we not ſeize and quell theſe growing doubts by a quick and vigorous effort of the mind. The queſtion then, whereof you want a ſolution, is involved in the five following points, which it will be neceſſary to illuſtrate: 1. The ſimplicity or unity of Providence. 2. The order and chain of Deſtiny. 3. Unexpected events attributed to chance. 4. The

preſcience of God and divine predeſtination. 5. The liberty of the human will.—You are undoubtedly ſenſible that theſe are very arduous and perplexing ſubjects: but as a knowledge of them is a part of the medicine I propoſed for your cure, and will contribute much to it; I ſhall employ the ſhort time that remains to me, in giving you ſome light and information of theſe particulars. Whilſt I purſue, in a connected chain, that train of reaſoning which the ſubject ſuggeſts, I ſhall deprive you of the pleaſure you receive from the harmony of my verſes. —Do as you pleaſe, with regard to that.—She then reſumed her diſcourſe, as it were, from a new ſource of topicks, and argued as follows.

The production of all things, the renewal and gradual progreſſion of whatever is liable to change; every thing, in a word, that is moved, derives its cauſes, order, and forms, from the immutability of the divine underſtanding. Now, the divine underſtanding, tho' ſingle, and in itſelf uncompounded, employs a variety of means or inſtruments for conducting the affairs of the univerſe. Theſe means, when we conſider them only as they exiſt in the divine Intelligence, are what we call Providence *; but when contemplat-

Philoſophy defines what Providence is, and what Fate or Deſtiny.

* Boethius ſpeaks here as a metaphyſician with regard to the divine Providence, which the heathens repreſented under the figure of a Roman lady, who held a ſcepter in her one hand, and ſeemed to point with it, to a globe placed at her feet; intimating thereby that ſhe governed the world, as a good mother of a family.

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ed, in relation to the things which receive motion and order from them, this is what the antients called Deſtiny*. So that if we reflect with attention on the efficacy of the one and the other, their difference will eaſily appear. For Providence is that intelligence, or divine reaſon, which reſides in the ſovereign maſter of the univerſe, and directs all things; whilſt Deſtiny is that inherent ſtate or condition of moveable things, by means whereof Providence retains them in the order and arrangement in which ſhe has placed them. Providence, therefore, at one and the ſame time, comprehends all things, however different, however multiplied they be; but Deſtiny gives motion to every particular thing, in the mean time appointed, and in the place and under the form appropriated to it. So that the model of this order of things, when we conſider it, as wrapt up in the divine Intelligence, is Providence; whereas the accompliſhment of the ſame order, drawn forth and executed in the courſe of time, is Deſtiny.

* Or Fate. Quid enim, ſays Minutius Felix, aliud eſt fatum, quam quod de uno quoque noſtrum Deus effatus eſt? qui cum poſſet præſcire materiam, promeritis et qualitatibus ſingulorum etiam fata determinat.

"What therefore elſe is fate, but the ſentence which God pronounces with regard to every one of us? who, as he knows before-hand our frame, the materials of which we are compoſed, determines, according to our deſerts and qualities, the fate or condition of every individual."

Tho' the difference betwixt *theſe* be apparent, the one nevertheleſs depends on the other; ſince the order of Deſtiny is but an emanation from the ſimplicity or unity of Providence. For as a workman, who has formed in his head the plan of a work which he is deſirous to finiſh, executes it afterwards, and produces in proceſs of time all the different parts of the model which he has conceived; ſo God, in the plan of his Providence, diſpoſes every thing to be brought about, in a certain order and in a proper time; and afterwards, by the miniſtry of Deſtiny, he accompliſhes what he has thus planned, in conformity to that order and that time. Whether it be by the agency of ſpirits *, attendants upon Providence,

* "Whether it be by the agency of ſpirits, attendants upon Providence, that Deſtiny operates, or by a ſoul, or by the miniſtry of the whole frame of nature, or by the influence of the ſtars, or by the power of angels, or the unwearied induſtry of demons; or whether it be by any one of theſe, or by all of them together, that the chain of Deſtiny is formed."——What Boethius means by the agency of ſpirits, attendants upon Providence, as diſtinct from the angels, I do not underſtand.—By a ſoul, he probably means the ſoul of the world, according to Plato: for it was Plato's opinion, that God, who deſigned the univerſe ſhould be as perfect as poſſible, animated it with a ſoul or ſpirit to govern it, to repreſs the diſcord of the elements, and to preſerve harmony in it.——"By the miniſtry of the whole frame of nature."—Boethius, in alluſion to the doctrine of the Stoicks, underſtands by this, the divine reaſon extending over all the works of the univerſe, or that law of God's providence by which he governs the world, λογος, καθ' ον ὁ κοσμος διεξαγεται.—Diog. Laert. L. vii. § 149.—"By the influence of the ſtars:"—'Moſt men,' ſays Pliny, in his 2d Book of Natural Hiſtory, 'believe that their deſtiny depends upon 'the

providence, that Deſtiny operates, or by a ſoul, or by the miniſtry of the whole frame of nature, or by the influence of the ſtars, or by the power of angels, or the unwearied induſtry of demons; or whether it be by any one of theſe things, or by all of them together, that the chain of Deſtiny is formed; it is evident Providence is the invariable, the ſimple, and uncompounded train of conducting every thing; and that Deſtiny is the fluctuating contexture and temporal arrangement of thoſe things which Providence has ordained to be done. Hence it appears, that the things ſubordinate to Deſtiny, are alſo under the dominion of Providence, which controls and rules Deſtiny itſelf: whereas there are ſome things placed under the immediate direction of Providence, which are exempted from the juriſdiction of Fate; and theſe are ſuch as are placed near to the Divinity himſelf; the ſtability of which, upon that account, is ſo great, that they are not affected with the movements of Deſtiny.—To

' the influence of the ſtar that preſided at their birth.' 'This opinion,' he adds, 'has made a great progreſs, not only among the ignorant, 'but even among the learned.' It was, in fact, an opinion that almoſt univerſally prevailed for many ages. Hence judicial aſtrology, or the art of foretelling things by the ſtars, was heretofore ſtudied and held in the higheſt eſteem; but is now deſervedly contemned and exploded.——"By the power of angels, or the induſtry of the demons." —By the angels we are to underſtand the inferior gods and good genii of the Platoniſts and Stoicks; and by the demons are meant the evil genii of theſe philoſophers.

comprehend my idea, figure to yourſelf ſeveral globes revolving round one common centre. Now, that which is innermoſt, as it approaches neareſt to the *ſimplicity of the middle point*, or centre, becomes itſelf as it were a centre to the globes placed without it, round which they roll; whilſt the outermoſt of them, revolving in a wider circumference the farther it is from the centre, deſcribes a larger ſpace; but if this outermoſt ſphere, or any thing whatever, ſhould be joined and annexed to the middle point, you muſt allow it will partake of its ſimplicity and ſtability, and will loſe that tendency to motion and change, which all things more remote from the centre are condemned to.— By a like manner of reaſoning, we conclude, that the further any thing is removed from the firſt Intelligence, it is ſo much the more under the controul of Deſtiny; whereas, on the contrary, the nearer any thing approaches to that Intelligence, which is the centre of all things, it becomes more ſtable, and leſs dependent upon Deſtiny. And if we ſuppoſe that the thing in queſtion is joined to the immutability of the Supreme Intelligence, it then becomes immoveable, and does not at all depend upon the neceſſity of fate. Therefore, as reaſoning is to the underſtanding; as that which is produced is to that which exiſts of itſelf; as time is to eternity; and as the circumference to the center; ſo is the moveable order of

Deſtiny to the ſtable ſimplicity of Providence. It is this chain of deſtiny which moves the heavens and the ſtars, which preſerves the harmony that reigns among the elements, and cauſes them to aſſume forms infinitely varied. It is this which renews every thing that is once produced, by preſerving the fecundity of ſexes and of ſeeds. It is this likewiſe that conſtrains the actions and fortunes of men, by cauſes, the connection whereof cannot be broken; which, as they derive their origin from an immoveable Providence, muſt, like it, be alſo immoveable. In this manner are all things well conducted, as the ſimplicity reſiding in the divine underſtanding produces that invariable order of cauſes; and this order, by its own inherent immutability, reſtrains things in their nature mutable, and preſerves them from all irregular wandering and fluctuation.—Hence, to ignorant mortals, who cannot comprehend this order, things appear irregular and confuſed; the condition of all things nevertheleſs is ſuch, that they are directed and impelled by it to their good: for there is nothing done merely for the ſake of evil, even by the wicked themſelves, who in their reſearches after good, as I have clearly proved to you, are led aſtray from it by deluſive error; but in no wiſe by that pure order which flows from the centre of the Supreme Goodneſs, which cannot poſſibly miſlead any creature from its origin. But you may perhaps ſay, How can there be a more

more unequal diſtribution of events, than that proſperous and calamitous things ſhould be alternately dealed to the virtuous; whilſt the wicked are, in like manner, delighted with the enjoyment of what they wiſh, and anon diſtreſſed with the evils which they abhor? But what then? Can you affirm that men's underſtandings are ſo infallible as to diſcover whether thoſe whom they believe virtuous or wicked, are ſo in reality? You know well that their judgments differ widely upon this point; and that perſons, who by ſome are thought worthy of a reward, are by others deemed deſerving of puniſhment. But let us ſuppoſe that a man could with certainty diſtinguiſh the good from the bad; we muſt ſuppoſe him in this caſe able to explore the frame and contexture of the human mind, with the ſame accuracy as anatomiſts do that of the body: for without this knowledge, it would be as impoſſible for him to diſtinguiſh men of worth from their oppoſites, as it would be for one ignorant of the art of phyſic to ſay why bitter aliments agree with ſome men's conſtitutions, and ſweet with thoſe of others; or why certain maladies are relieved by lenitives, and others by powerful remedies. Though theſe effects be ſurprizing to the ignorant, they are not ſo to the phyſician who knows the conſtitution of the human body, the cauſes of diſeaſes, and their cures. But what, I

pray

pray you, conſtitutes the health of the mind, but virtue? and whence are its maladies derived, but from vice? Who is it that diffuſes bleſſings upon mankind and ſaves them from evil, but God alone, who is the guide and phyſician of ſouls? who, from the exalted obſervatory of his Providence, beholds all the wants of his creation, ſees what is neceſſary to every individual, and beſtows it upon them. From this ſource is derived that wonderful miracle, *the order of deſtiny*; a miracle wrought by the wiſdom of God, which aſtoniſhes ignorant mortals. But let us now diſcourſe a little upon the few things which our feeble reaſon permits us to know of the profound abyſs of the Divinity. The man whom you eſteem the moſt juſt, and the ſtricteſt obſerver of equity, appears otherwiſe to the eye of that Providence who knoweth every thing. Lucan, our pupil, in his Pharſalia, ſays,

Tho' Heav'n declar'd on the victorious ſide,
The vanquiſh'd cauſe by Cato was embrac'd.

Be perſuaded then, that whatever you ſee done here contrary to your expectations and wiſhes, is in conſequence of a good order eſtabliſhed over all nature, although to your apprehenſion it may appear the effect of irregular confuſion. Let us ſuppoſe a man of ſuch pure and exemplary morals, that he is equally agreeable to God and men,

men, but not endued with a ſufficient ſtrength of mind; ſo that upon a ſmall reverſe of fortune, he might perhaps forego his probity, finding that it cannot preſerve him in a ſtate of proſperity. The wiſdom of God, therefore, knowing that adverſity might deſtroy this man's integrity, graciouſly averts from him calamities which he is not able to ſuſtain. Another, again, is ſo thoroughly virtuous, that in the ſanctity of his life he approaches in ſome meaſure to the purity of the Deity; Providence is ſo far from diſtreſſing ſuch a perſon with the evils of life, that it even exempts him from its diſeaſes: for, as one more excellent than I am, has obſerved *, *the Virtues build up the body of the holy man.* But to return; Providence often entruſts the direction of public affairs to men of worth, that the outrageous malice of the wicked may be curbed and reſtrained. To ſome ſhe diſtributes a mixture of good and evil, as what is beſt adapted to the diſpoſition of their minds. To ſome again ſhe gives a check by moderate afflictions, leſt they grow wanton and unruly by a continued flow of proſperity; whilſt ſhe involves others in the moſt perplexing diſtreſſes and difficulties, that their virtues may

* Interpreters are at a loſs about the perſon here referred to. Some imagine that it is the great Egyptian philoſopher Hermes Trismegiſtus. Others ſuppoſe that Philoſophy alludes to ſome eminent ſaint or chriſtian divine endowed with the Holy Spirit, becauſe ſhe mentioned him as a perſon more excellent than herſelf.

be

be exerciſed and ſtrengthened by the practice of patience. Many are intimidated without cauſe, at the proſpect of what they can eaſily ſuſtain. Others raſhly deſpiſe what they are altogether unable to bear; and to render ſuch ſenſible of their ill-grounded preſumption, God often puniſhes them with calamities. Some have acquired immortal renown by a glorious death. Others, by their unſhaken conſtancy in torments, have exhibited examples that virtue cannot be vanquiſhed. Now, that all theſe events are the effects of a juſt and well-regulated order of things, and that they promote the good of the perſons to whom they befall, will not admit of a doubt. For the ſame reaſons it happens, that adverſity is at one time the lot of the wicked, and proſperity at another. That bad men are diſtreſſed with evils is a ſurprize to none, becauſe all are of opinion, they juſtly merit puniſhment; beſides, what they ſuffer is of uſe to amend themſelves, and to deter others from wickedneſs: that good things, on the other hand, fall to their ſhare, is a leſſon to the virtuous; teaching them how little theſe external advantages ought to be prized, which are often beſtowed upon the moſt profligate of mortals. Another reaſon for diſpenſing worldly advantages to the wicked, is, that perhaps the diſpoſitions of ſome of them are naturally ſo violent and rapacious, that indigence would prompt them to commit the greateſt enormities: Providence therefore makes

makes uſe of abundance, as a remedy, to prevent them from falling into ſuch miſery. Further; ſuch a perſon is ſtung with the reproach of a guilty conſcience, and perceiving that he cannot perſiſt in his iniquitous courſes, and retain his riches; he is therefore under diſmal apprehenſions at the proſpect of loſing what he enjoys with ſo much pleaſure, and is upon that account led to a change of manners; the fear of forfeiting his fortune, engaging him to relinquiſh his wickedneſs. Another, again, by managing his proſperous fortune unworthily, precipitates himſelf into deſerved miſery. To ſome bad men, in fine, Providence imparts the power of inflicting puniſhments, with a view both to chaſtiſe other wicked perſons, and to exerciſe the fortitude of the good: for as there is no concord betwixt the virtuous and the wicked; ſo neither can the vicious agree with one another. And how ſhould they? as they are at perpetual war with themſelves; their crimes ſitting ſo heavy upon their conſciences, that there is ſcarce any thing they do but they afterwards diſapprove. Hence ariſes a ſignal miracle brought about by Divine Providence, that the wicked often reform their brethren in iniquity, and render them good; for theſe latter having ſuffered injuries from the former, their reſentment excites them to become virtuous themſelves, that they may no more bear any reſemblance to perſons whom they ſo thoroughly deteſt. Thus we ſee,

that

that it is the power of Deity alone that can draw good out of evil, over-rule it for his own purpoſes, and deduce from it beneficial conſequences. For in all God's works, we may plainly perceive that there is a fixed order which comprehends every thing that exiſts: ſo that if any thing departs from the particular arrangement wherein it is placed, it muſt neceſſarily fall under another eſtabliſhment; as in the realms of Providence, the caprice and irregularity of chance has no dominion. But after all, as the poet obſerves, it is difficult to unfold what relates to the Divinity. In fact, it is preſumptuous in man to attempt to comprehend the whole œconomy of the ſovereign of the univerſe; and ſtill more ſo, to endeavour to explain it in words. Let it ſatisfy us to know, that God, who formed all beings, diſpoſes and directs them to good; and that, while he retains every thing he has created, in an order worthy of his unerring wiſdom, he makes uſe of that chain of deſtiny which he hath eſtabliſhed, to baniſh every evil from the immenſe circuit of his empire. If you will therefore contemplate with attention the conduct of Providence, you will be convinced that the evils which ſeem to overflow the univerſe, exiſt only in your own imagination. But I now perceive that you are confounded and exhauſted with the length of my reaſoning, and with the intricacy

and obſcurity of theſe diſquiſitions; and that you are impatiently expecting relief from the harmony of my numbers. Let us therefore interrupt the courſe of our arguments, and ſtrive to ſooth and refreſh your mind with pleaſing and melodious ſtrains; that it may be brought into a proper frame to comprehend what ſtill remains to be diſcuſſed.

Studious of matters great and high,
Wouldſt thou the thund'rer's pow'r explore,
Survey the ſpacious vaulted ſky
With glowing ſtars beſpangled o'er.

Whilſt man's frail race quick waſtes away,
Unchang'd theſe wond'rous orbs endure,
Roll ceaſeleſs on in fair array,
By laws conducted wiſe and ſure.

Faithful the ſun returns each day,
All nature quick'ning with his light;
The moon ſucceeds with milder ray,
And gladdens and adorns the night.

Nightly, the beaming pole around,
The northern Bear conducts his train,
Nor ſtrays from his appointed bound,
To reſt him in the rolling main.

Fair

Fair Veſpér, to his office true,
At eve renews with light his horn;
And ſhaking from his locks the dew,
Bright Phoſphor uſhers in the morn.

Kept firm by love's eternal chain,
Th' etherial lamps their rounds revolve;
No ſtrife diſturbs the radiant train,
No force their concord can diſſolve.

What—but this energy divine
Such jarring elements could tame;
Such oppoſites in union join,
As form the world's harmonious frame?

The humid atoms war no more
With dry, nor heat with cold contends;
Th' aſpiring flame delights to ſoar,
Whilſt down the ſluggiſh earth deſcends.

Goodneſs ſupreme the ſeaſons leads;—
In Spring the balmy zephyr blows,
And ſtrait the field its verdure ſpreads;
Their beauties Flora's race diſcloſe.

Summer conducts the ſultry hours,
And ripens Ceres' golden grain;
With plenty crown'd kind Autumn pours
His ſtores, and glads the laughing ſwain.

Earth's fruitful lap ſtern Winter bares,
His ſnows deſcend, his tempeſts blow;
The glebe his nitrous froſts prepares,
Abundant harveſts to beſtow.

The ſeaſons, in ſucceſſion fair,
Give life and growth to all that breathe;—
Progreſſive ſeaſons unaware
Revolve;—they periſh all by death.

Meanwhile, th' Eternal ſits ſerene
Upon his everlaſting throne;
Whoſe power almighty form'd this ſcene
Of things at firſt, and rules alone:

Sole ſource of goodneſs and of grace,
Of truth and right th' unerring cauſe,
Who knits and tames man's wayward race,
By order, government, and laws:

Whoſe boundleſs, all-pervading ſoul,
Impels, and checks, and rules at will
The motions of *th' amazing whole*,
And turns to good each ſeeming ill.

Did not his ſecret-working hand
Give every wheel its round to know;
Did he not every ſpring command,
This world would ſoon a chaos grow.

See then the univerſal chain
That all connects—Almighty Love!
See urg'd by this, how all again
Preſs to that center whence they move!

All fortune, whether proſperous or adverſe, is good.

Do you now perceive, continued ſhe, the conſequence that flows from all that we have been reaſoning upon?—What is it?—That all fortune is abſolutely good.—How is that poſſible?—Since all fortune, ſaid ſhe, whether agreeable or vexatious, is employed, either to reward or exerciſe the good, or to puniſh and correct the bad: every event therefore which can befal a man muſt be good, as it is clearly either juſt or uſeful.—What you ſay is true; and if I conſider Providence and Deſtiny as you have repreſented them to me, I ſhall find your reaſoning well founded. But let us, notwithſtanding, put this opinion, if you pleaſe, among the number of thoſe poſitions, which you formerly ſuppoſed were incredible. But why ſhould we do that?—Becauſe there is no phraſe, ſaid I, more common and frequent among men, than that the fortune of ſuch a perſon is bad.—Would you then wiſh, added ſhe, that we ſhould conform for a moment to the language of the vulgar, leſt we ſeem to depart too much from the manner of conceiving and expreſſing things familiar among men?—Do as you pleaſe.—Do you think, ſaid ſhe, that every thing that is uſeful is good?—Certainly.—Every fortune, then, or con-

dition of life, which either exerciſes or corrects, is uſeful.—To this I agree.—Conſequently, every fortune which exerciſes and corrects, is good.—Unqueſtionably it is.—But this is evidently the fortune of all, who, by adhering to virtue, have adverſity to combat with; or by relinquiſhing vice, purſue the road of virtue.—I muſt allow that it is.—But with regard to that proſperous fortune, which is diſpenſed to the worthy as a reward; do the vulgar think it bad?—Not at all; they believe it very good, as it is in reality.—Once more; Do they believe the calamities good, that puniſh the wicked, and reſtrain the courſe of their malice?—On the contrary, anſwered I, they look upon them as the moſt miſerable events that can poſſibly be imagined.—But let us take care, added ſhe, leſt by adhering to the opinion of the vulgar, we have not involved ourſelves in a new conſequence that is incredible.—What conſequence is that?—Does it not clearly follow, from the conceſſions formerly made, that the fortune of all, who have either acquired virtue, or are ſtriving to acquire it, and to make a progreſs in it, muſt neceſſarily be good; but that the fortune of ſuch as perſiſt in vice muſt be wretched in the higheſt degree?—The conſequence is juſt, anſwered I, though there are none who have the courage to confeſs it.—But why, added ſhe, do they not? ſince the wiſe man ought ſurely to be as undejected, when he is brought into

into the field to wage war with fortune, as the brave man is undiſmayed with the din of arms, and the tumultuous uproar of the battle: as the dangers of war open to the one a field to acquire glory; ſo the difficulties which he has to encounter, preſent the other with an opportunity of exerciſing and diſplaying his wiſdom. Thus virtue, as we learn from the etymology of the word *, is no other thing than a power relying upon its own proper ſtrength, which ſurmounts and conquers every oppoſing obſtacle. Let it be your buſineſs, then, my pupil, who have made ſuch a progreſs in virtue; let it be your particular care not to place your happineſs in luxury, nor to ſuffer yourſelf to be enervated with pleaſure. You have a perpetual war to carry on againſt both fortunes; with the bad leſt it diſmay you, with the good leſt it corrupt you. Seize then the *golden mean* †, ſo eſſential to happi-

* *Virtus*, the Latin word, whence virtue is taken, is derived from *vires*, which ſignifies ſtrength.

† To this Horace exhorts:

Auream quiſquis mediocritatem
Diligit, tutus caret obſoleti
Sordibus tecti, caret invidendâ
Sobrius aulâ.

The man within the golden mean,
Who can his boldeſt wiſh contain,
Securely views the ruin'd cell
Where ſordid want and ſorrow dwell;
And in himſelf ſerenely great,
Declines an envied room of ſtate.

FRANCIS.

neſs, and retain it with all your might. Whoever ſoars above, or deſcends below this line, acquires nothing but a contemptible felicity, and unworthy of his labour. To conclude, it depends upon yourſelf to chooſe what fortune you pleaſe: but let this maxim be remembered, that every fortune which is called adverſe, unleſs it exerciſes or amends, always puniſhes.

To puniſh Paris' guilty flame,
And vindicate his brother's ſhame,
Ten tedious years imperial Troy
Atrides battled to deſtroy.
At Aulis, whilſt the Chief deplores
His fleet, detain'd on Grecian ſhores,
To waft to Troy his num'rous ſails
With blood he bought propitious gales:
Diana's vengeance to remove,
The parent from his heart he drove,
And weeping ſaw his daughter's breaſt
Pierc'd by the dagger of the prieſt.
Whilſt giant Polyphemus tore
Ulyſſes'-mates, and ſwill'd their gore;
The Chief, benevolent and wiſe,
Their fate laments with ſtreaming eyes:
But ſoon as by his matchleſs ſleight,
The Cyclops 'wail'd his loſs of ſight,
He joy'd to hear the monſter roar,
And ſhake Sicilia's ſtartled ſhore.

The

The great Alcides' deathleſs name
His labours conſecrate to fame *.—
The Centaurs fierce he firſt o'erthrew;
Next,—the Nemean lion ſlew;
And wore, a trophy of his toil,
The dreadful creature's ſhaggy ſpoil:
His arrows pierce the Harpies dire;
He kill'd the dragon, breathing fire †;
And bore his dearly purchas'd prey,
The glitt'ring golden fruit, away:
Cerberian fury he reſtrains,
And leads the monſter-dog in chains:
The mangled corſe of Diomede ‡
He gave the tyrant's colts to feed:
The horrid Hydra to his ire
A victim falls,—ſubdued by fire:
His front diſhonour'd, ſtruck with ſhame,
Sad Achelous ‖ glides a ſtream,

Nor

* Philoſophy teaches, by the example of Hercules, the ſon of Jupiter and Alcmena, that heaven and immortality are not to be obtained but by many labours and difficulties. In this poem the twelve famous labours of Hercules are pointed out; moſt of which are ſo well known, that it is needleſs to make remarks upon them: for who has not heard of the Centaurs, of the Nemean lion, of the Harpies, of the dog Cerberus, and of Cacus?

† The daughters of Heſperus, a king in Africa, had a garden planted with trees producing golden apples, guarded by a dragon breathing fire; this monſter Hercules ſlew, and carried the fruit to Euriſtheus his father-in-law.

‡ Diomede, a king of Thrace, was ſo cruel, that he fed his horſes with human fleſh. Hercules ſlew this tyrant, and gave him to be devoured by his own horſes.

‖ Achelous, the ſon of Oceanus and Tethys, fought with Hercules for

Nor dares *the matchleſs hero* face,
But tells in murmurs his diſgrace:
Antæus, next, his arms compreſt,
And ſqueez'd to death *the ſtruggling peſt* †:
Then, ſtorming villain Cacus' cave,
He freed his herds, and ſlew the ſlave:
The hero's ſhoulders, ſoon to bear
The weight of the celeſtial ſphere,
The ſlaughter'd Erymanthian boar ‡
Defiles with horrid foam and gore:
In fine, when Atlas ‖ 'wail'd his fate,
Of heav'n's whole frame to bear the weight,

for Deianira, the daughter of Oeneus, king of Calydonea; but as he was inferior to the hero in ſtrength, Achelous turned himſelf firſt into a ſerpent, and afterwards into a bull; in which latter form Hercules attacked him, and cut off his horn, which became the horn of plenty. Achelous, aſhamed to appear with one horn, converted himſelf into a river of Epirus, called after him.

† Antæus, the ſon of Neptune and the Earth, a giant of prodigious ſtrength, who, when he was knocked down by Hercules, immediately received new ſtrength from his mother. Hercules was therefore obliged to hold him up in his arms and ſqueeze him to death.

‡ The boar of Mount Erymanthus of Arcadia, which was ſo large and fierce that it had almoſt depopulated the whole country. Hercules rid the world of this monſter.

‖ Atlas was a king of Mauritania, and a great aſtronomer, and was therefore ſaid to bear the heavens upon his ſhoulders. Hercules is fabled to have eaſed him of his burden for one day; and merited, as the poets relate, by this his laſt and nobleſt labour, to be admitted into the ſociety of the gods.—King Atlas, the poets ſay, was changed into a mountain of Africa that bears his name, which, from its amazing height, ſeems to ſupport the heavens. The extent of the Atlantean mountains is very great, reaching through far the greateſt part of Africa, from the Atlantic Ocean (ſo called from this mountain) to the deſarts of Barca.

Th'

Th' enormous load his back receiv'd;
And Atlas of his toil reliev'd.
Such were the paths the hero trod;
Theſe labours rais'd him to a God!
Rouſe, mortals, rouſe; purſue his plan;
Go,—imitate the wond'rous man:
Let nought your dauntleſs ſouls diſmay;
Ruſh on, where virtue leads the way;
In glorious deeds exulting riſe,
And ſoar triumphant to the ſkies.

BOOK V.

Philoſophy defines Chance.——She explains wherein freedom of will conſiſts.——She ſolves the old objection againſt Providence, by proving that the preſcience of God neither binds man's will, nor deſtroys human liberty.

WHEN ſhe had thus finiſhed, and was about to turn her diſcourſe to the illuſtration and diſcuſſion of other matters, I interrupted her.—Your exhortation is ſalutary and beneficial, and becomes your authority: but I now find by experience, that the queſtion in reſpect to Providence is, as you obſerved, involved with many others: I am therefore deſirous of knowing, whether there is any ſuch thing as Chance, and what you think it is.—I am haſtening, replied ſhe, to acquit myſelf of my promiſe, and to lay open the road, which will aſſuredly conduct you to your native country: and tho' the matters you

you are inquiſitive about, be well deſerving of your knowledge; yet, as they lie a little out of the way to the goal we have in view, I am apprehenſive that by making ſo wide a circuit, you will be too much fatigued to hold out to the end of your journey.—Don't be afraid of that, ſaid I; for to learn thoſe things that are ſo delightfully inſtructing, will be more refreſhing to me than reſt itſelf: beſides, as theſe queſtions have a connexion with your ſubject, when they are explained, your diſcourſe being cleared from every difficulty, will reſt on the baſis of unqueſtionable truth, and it will not be poſſible for me to retain any doubt in relation to what ſhall remain to be diſcuſſed. —Your importunate deſires ſhall be gratified; and thus ſhe immediately proceeded:

Philoſophy defines Chance.

If Chance is defined an event produced by motion, operating without deſign, and not by a chain or connexion of cauſes, I ſhould then affirm it to be nothing; and, except as a word ſerving to expreſs what we are reaſoning about, I pronounce it an empty ſound, without any real ſignification. —For how can any thing happen without deſign, when all events, through the influence of Almighty Power, are reſtrained by order? That from nothing, nothing can proceed, is an axiom, the truth of which none of the antients ever called in queſtion: tho' this axiom be true, only as it relates to all created exiſtences, but by no means true as it reſpects their efficient cauſe. Now if any

any thing arises without the operation of a cause, it must proceed from nothing; but as this is evidently impossible, Chance is not therefore what it is asserted to be in the foregoing definition.—What, says I, is there nothing fortuitous? nothing that may be called Chance? is not there any thing, tho' concealed from the apprehensions of the vulgar, to which these appellations may be applied?—Aristotle, my disciple, replied she, has in his Physicks explained this question with much precision and probability.—"If "any thing," says he, "is done for a particular "end or purpose, but if a certain concur- "rence of causes produces some other thing than "was intended, it is called Chance.—For instance; "if a labourer in digging a piece of ground, with "a view to improve it, discovers a concealed trea- "sure, this is said to happen by chance: but this "discovery of the labourer does not spring from "nothing; it arises from particular causes; the "unforeseen and unexpected concourse of which "brings about the event. For if the labourer "had not trenched the ground, and the person "who concealed the treasure had not buried it in "that very spot, it had not been discovered." These then are the causes of this fortuitous acquisition: from these alone it arose, and not from any intention of the human will. For it was not the design, either of the person who hid the treasure, nor of him who laboured the ground, that

that this diſcovery ſhould have been made. But as I juſt now ſaid, the one finding it convenient to dig, where the other had concealed the money, by the concurrence of theſe two cauſes, the former obtained the prize. Chance may be therefore defined, *an unexpected event, by a concurrence of cauſes, following an action deſigned for a particular purpoſe.* Now, this concurrence of cauſes is the effect of that neceſſary order, which ſtreams from the pure fountain of Providence, and diſpoſes every thing in its proper time and place.

Where flying Parthians pierce th' aſtoniſh'd foe
With deathful ſhafts; from lofty Taurus' ſide *,
The rapid Tigris, and Euphrates flow,
And o'er the deſart pour one current wide.

But ſoon the ſtreams divided trace their way,
And winding on, in ſeparate channels glide;
Thro' ſandy waſtes and peopled realms they ſtray,
Till, join'd again, they pour a mighty tide.

* It was ſuppoſed by the ancients, that the Tigris and the Euphrates iſſued from the ſame ſource, Mount Taurus, and poured along in one current; but that this current afterwards was divided into two ſeparate ſtreams: this is now found not to be the caſe. The ſources of theſe rivers are diſtant from one another about 250 miles. After encompaſſing the ancient Meſopotamia and Babylonia, theſe rivers join their ſtreams, and flow together into the Perſian Gulph.

Whate'er th' impetuous rivers bore along,
Boats, ſhips, and trees, now in their blended ſtream
Are daſh'd and huddl'd in tumultuous throng,
And by blind Chance the currents guided ſeem.

But Chance capricious holds no empire here;
The rolling rivers Nature's laws obey;—
Declining ſtill, their downward tracks they ſteer,
And lighter bodies in their ſtreams convey.

They mix, and ſeparate, and unite again,
By Sovereign Wiſdom taught their beds to know:—
Reſt then in this; Chance holds no ruling rein,
But kind intention governs all below.

Philoſophy explains wherein Freedom of will conſiſts.

I underſtand you perfectly, ſaid I, and aſſent to the truth of what you advance: but in this indiſſoluble chain of cauſes, can we preſerve the liberty of the will? Does this fatal Neceſſity reſtrain the motions of the human ſoul?—There is no reaſonable being, replied ſhe, who has not freedom of will: for every being diſtinguiſhed with this faculty is endowed with judgment to perceive the differences of things; to diſcover what he is to avoid or purſue. Now what a perſon eſteems deſirable, he deſires; but what he thinks ought to be avoided, he ſhuns. Thus every

every rational creature hath a liberty of chuſing and rejecting. But I do not aſſert, that this liberty is equal in all beings. Heavenly ſubſtances, who are exalted above us, have an enlightened judgment, an incorruptible will, and a power ever at command effectually to accompliſh their deſires. With regard to man, his immaterial ſpirit is alſo free; but it is moſt at liberty, when employed in the contemplation of the divine mind; it becomes leſs ſo, when it enters into a body *; and is ſtill more reſtrained, when it is impriſoned in a terreſtrial habitation, compoſed of members of clay; and is reduced, in fine, to the moſt extreme ſervitude, when by plunging into the pollutions of vice, it totally departs from reaſon: for the ſoul no ſooner turns her eye from the radiance of ſupreme truth, to dark and baſe objects, but ſhe is involved in a miſt of ignorance, aſſailed by impure deſires; by yielding to which, ſhe encreaſes her thraldom; and thus the freedom which ſhe derives from nature, becomes in ſome meaſure the cauſe of her ſlavery. But the eye of Providence, which ſees every thing from eternity, perceives all this; and that ſame Providence diſpoſes every thing ſhe has predeſtinated, in the order it deſerves. As Homer

* "It becomes leſs ſo when it enters into a body."—Boethius reaſons here according to the opinion of Plato, who believed in the preexiſtence of ſouls; and that the ſame ſoul might animate a variety of bodies, differing greatly in degrees of purity.

ſays of the ſun, it ſees every thing, and hears every thing *.

Homer, in mellifluous lays,
Sings the ſun's all-piercing rays.—
Phœbus' beams, whom men adore,
Only ſtream the ſurface o'er,
Reach not Tellus' hidden caves,
Pierce not Ocean's rolling waves.
But th' Eternal from on high,
With his all-perceiving eye,
Sees his wide creation through—
Starting open to his view;
(While her ſable mantles, Night
Vainly ſpreads to bar his ſight)
Darteth He, with piercing ray,
Where Sol's beams can never ſtray;
Sees—what's hid in earth's dark caves,
Sees—what lurks beneath the waves:
All events at once doth ſee,
Preſent, paſt, and what ſhall be.
Him the Sun then rightly call—
God, who ſees and lightens all.

* Epictetus in Arrian ſays, And is not God capable of ſurveying all things, and being preſent with all, and receiving a certain communication from all? Is the ſun capable of illuminating ſo great a portion of the univerſe, and of leaving only that ſmall part of it unilluminated, which is covered by the ſhadow of the earth? and cannot he who made and revolves the ſun, a ſmall part of himſelf, if compared with the whole; cannot he perceive all things?

Mrs. Carter's Tranſlation, B. I. c. xiv. ſ. 1.

But

* But now, said I, a difficulty arises, which perplexes me more than all the foregoing.—What is that? though I believe I can guess the cause of your perplexity.—God's foreknowledge of all events, answered I, seems to me altogether inconsistent with the free-will of man: for if God foresees all things, and cannot possibly be deceived, then, that which he foresees to happen in future, must necessarily happen: if from eternity God had foreseen not only the actions of men, but their designs and wills, there would be no liberty of choice; as in this case men have it not in their power to do any action, nor to form any will, but those which have been foreseen by God's infallible Providence. In fact, if things could be wrested in such a manner, as to happen otherwise than they have been foreseen, the prescience of God, in regard to futurity, would not be sure and unerring; it would be nothing more than an uncertain opinion: but I esteem it impious to entertain such an idea of God; nor do I at all approve the reasoning made use of by some, for the solution of this perplexing question. "Things, say they, do not necessarily befal, be-"cause the Divine Providence hath foreseen they

* Hence, to the end of the book, Boethius discusses the famous question relative to the prescience of God, and the freedom of the human will. He treats this subject at length; and proves by ingenious, and at least plausible, arguments, that the foreknowledge of Deity does not bind the will of man, and destroy human liberty.

"were to happen; but rather, becauſe they "were to happen, Providence could not be ig- "norant of them." Now by this way of reaſoning, the neceſſity appears as it were to change ſides: for it is not neceſſary, according to their opinion, that the things which are foreſeen ſhould happen; but it is neceſſary, however, that the things which are to befal ſhould be foreſeen; as if the queſtion was, which was the cauſe of the other — preſcience, of the neceſſity of future events; or the neceſſity, of the preſcience of future events. But I ſhall now endeavour to demonſtrate, that in whatever way the chain of cauſes is diſpoſed, the event of things which are foreſeen is neceſſary; although preſcience may not appear to be the neceſſitating cauſe of their befalling. For example; if a perſon ſits, the opinion formed of him that he is ſeated, is of neceſſity true: but by inverting the phraſe, if the opinion is true that he is ſeated, he muſt neceſſarily ſit. In both caſes then there is a neceſſity; in the latter, that the perſon ſits; in the former, that the opinion concerning him is true: but the perſon doth not ſit, becauſe the opinion of his ſitting is true; but the opinion is rather true, becauſe the action of his being ſeated was antecedent in time. Thus tho' the truth of the opinion may be the effect of the perſon taking a ſeat, there is nevertheleſs a neceſſity common to both. The ſame method of reaſoning, I think,

ſhould

ſhould be employed with regard to the preſcience of God, and future contingencies: for allowing it to be true, that events are foreſeen, becauſe they are to happen, and that they do not befal becauſe they are foreſeen; it is ſtill neceſſary, that what is to happen muſt be foreſeen by God, and that what is foreſeen muſt take place. This then is of itſelf ſufficient to deſtroy all idea of human liberty. But it is prepoſterous thus to attribute the eternal preſcience of God to the event of temporal things: for what difference is there in imagining, that God doth foreſee future events becauſe they are to happen; and to ſuppoſe that what hath actually happened in time paſt was the cauſe of his ſovereign preſcience? Moreover, as a thing neceſſarily is, when I know it be, ſo it will neceſſarily be when I know it is; the event therefore of a thing foreſeen, muſt neceſſarily befal. Laſtly, if a perſon ſuppoſes a thing different from what it is; this is not a knowledge of the thing in queſtion, but a falſe opinion of it, widely diſtant from the truth of ſcience; if a thing were therefore to befal in ſuch a way, that the event of it is neither neceſſary nor certain; how can any one foreſee that it is to happen? For as what we really do know is free from all uncertainty, ſo what is comprehended by ſcience cannot be otherwiſe than as comprehended: hence it is that true ſcience cannot err, becauſe every thing muſt preciſely be what her eye perceives it

to be. What then is the conſequence that flows from this? How does God foreknow theſe uncertain contingencies? For if he thinks a thing will inevitably happen, which poſſibly may not, he is deceived; which one can neither believe, nor ſay of God, without blaſphemy. But if he perceives that things will happen according to their caſual circumſtances; if he knows that they either may or may not take place; what ſort of preſcience is this, which comprehends nothing certain, nothing invariable? May it not be well compared with the ridiculous divination of Tireſias? *Whatever I ſay, either ſhall or ſhall not be* *.—In what, tell me, is the preſcience of God ſuperior to the opinion of men, if, like them, he judges with uncertainty in regard to things, the event whereof is not fixed? But if there can be nothing uncertain in his knowledge, who is

* Tireſias was a blind prophet or ſoothſayer of Thebes. Boethius takes this ridiculous divination from Horace, who, to ridicule the fooliſh credulity of the Romans of his time, upon the article of divination, makes Tireſias reply to Ulyſſes, who was conſulting him;

O Laertiade! quidquid dicam, *aut erit, aut non*,
Divinare etenim magnus mihi donat Apollo.
HOR. Sat. L. II. Sat. 5.

O ſon of great Laertes! *every thing*
Shall come to paſs, or never, as I ſing;
For Phœbus, monarch of the tuneful Nine,
Informs my ſoul, and gives me to divine.
FRANCIS.

the

the ſource of all certainty, the event of all things, which he aſſuredly foreknows, muſt be fixed and inevitable. Whence it follows, that there can be no liberty, neither in the deſigns nor in the actions of men; becauſe the Divine mind, endowed with an infallible foreſight, conſtrains and binds them to a certain event. But if this be granted, how great is the confuſion, how miſerable the diſtraction that hence ſprings up in human affairs? For it would be to no purpoſe to propoſe rewards or puniſhments to the good or the bad, when both of them are deprived of liberty, and when the will does not influence their actions. Rewards and puniſhments, which are now conſidered as both reaſonable and equitable, would then become very unjuſt; when it is allowed that mankind are not prompted by the determinations of their wills to virtue and vice, but in all their conduct compelled by a fatal neceſſity. If things were ſo conſtituted, there would be neither virtue nor vice; but ſuch a prepoſterous mixture of the one and the other, as would produce the moſt horrid and ſhocking confuſion. Now, this is the moſt impious idea that can poſſibly enter into the human mind. From ſuch extravagant principles,—that man has not the freedom of choice,—and that every event is diſpoſed and conſtrained by Divine preſcience,—we are forced to conclude, that all our vices ought to be aſcribed ſolely to God; to that Being, who is the ſource of every virtue, and

of all goodneſs. Suppoſing this the caſe, it will be of no uſe either to hope or to pray for any thing; for why ſhould men do either, when all they can deſire is irreverſibly predeſtined? Hope and prayer, becoming thus ineffectual, the only intercourſe betwixt God and the human race is cut off: for as by offering up our ſupplications with due reverence and humility, we merit the ineſtimable reward of the Divine grace and counſel; ſo it is by means of prayer, even before our requeſts are granted, that we ſeem to aſſociate, as it were, with the Deity, and to unite ourſelves to that inacceſſible light. But if a fixed irrevocable neceſſity of future events is admitted, prayer can have no effect; and what other way is there then left, wherewith we can be connected with the ſovereign author and diſpoſer of all things? Man therefore, as you formerly obſerved, being thus detached and diſunited from the ſource of his exiſtence, muſt ſink into nothing.

That God doth all events foreſee—
That every human act is free—
Are truths, when ſep'rate, plain and clear;
But join'd,—perplex'd and dark appear.
Declare then, what diſcordant cauſe
Puzzles and clouds perſpicuous laws?
Can things indiſputably true
Involve an inconſiſtence too?

Who

Who can the Gordian knot unlooſe,
And this deep myſtery diſcloſe?
The Heav'n-born mind, perhaps, you'll ſay,
Encumber'd with this load of clay,
Cannot perceive the ſecret ties
Of things, and nice dependencies.—
Why does ſhe then with ardour glow,
Matters beyond her reach to know?
Knows ſhe the ſecret ſhe would gain?
Then ſure—ſhe would not toil in vain,
If, weak and blind, ſhe knows it not,
Why gropes ſhe for ſhe knows not what?
None wiſh for what they never knew,
Nor matters wholly hid purſue.—
But grant,—that after ſearch profound
She finds it;—can ſhe ſay 'tis found?
Each mark unknown of what ſhe ſought,
Dares ſhe aſſert—the prize is got?
The ſoul at firſt, then, ſhall we ſay,
Illum'd with a celeſtial ray,
From Wiſdom's beaming ſource that ſprings,
Knew all the ſecret chains of things:—
But ſent from Heav'n's pure light to dwell
In this corporeal ſluggiſh cell;
Tho' clouds *the intellectual bright*
O'ercaſt, and dim her native light,
Clear marks of her celeſtial ſtrain,
And Heav'n-taught knowledge, ſtill remain;
Truth's outlines fair are ſtill impreſt
Diſtinctly on the human breaſt;

Tho'

Tho' individuals are forgot,
The ſum of things unknown is not.
In Science, then, who ſtrive to grow,
Studious reflect on what they know,
And calm inveſtigate again
The truths their minds did once retain.
Hence learn they to philoſophize,
And open Nature's myſteries.

Solution of objection againſt Providence, that God's preſcience deſtroys human liberty.

This, ſaid ſhe, is the old objection againſt Providence, ſo acutely handled by Cicero, in his Book of Divination, and ſo often anxiouſly enquired into by yourſelf; of which neither of you, nor any perſon whatever, has been able to give a ſatisfying ſolution. The cauſe of this myſtery is, that the human underſtanding cannot conceive the ſimplicity of the preſcience of God; for if it were poſſible to comprehend this, every difficulty would immediately vaniſh. I ſhall therefore firſt conſider the matters that give you uneaſineſs, and ſhall then try to explain and ſolve this perplexing queſtion. I aſk you then, Wherefore you do not approve the reaſoning of ſuch as think, "That preſcience does not obſtruct the liberty of the will, becauſe it is not "the neceſſitating cauſe of future events?" Do you draw any argument of the neceſſity of what ſhall happen in future, but from this propoſition, "That thoſe things which are foreſeen, muſt neceſſarily befal?"—But if the preſcience

ſcience of God impoſes no neceſſity upon events that are to befal, as even you were inclined to confeſs; muſt not the iſſue of things be voluntary, and man's will free and unconſtrained? To render the ſequel of my reaſoning the more perſpicuous, let us ſuppoſe there is no preſcience; Would then the events which proceed from free-will alone, and from no other ſource, be under the power of neceſſity?—No, anſwered I; by no means.—Again, continued ſhe, let us admit a preſcience, but that it impoſes no neceſſity upon what is to happen; the freedom of the will, I ſhould think, would ſtill remain uninfluenced and intire. But although preſcience, you may ſay, is not the neceſſary cauſe of future events, yet it is a ſign that they ſhall neceſſarily happen; and hence it follows, that, although there were no preſcience, future events would ſtill be bound in the chain of neceſſity. But here it ought to be conſidered, the ſign of a thing is not really the thing itſelf, but that it only points out what the individual is. For which reaſon it muſt be firſt made appear, that every thing happens by neceſſity, before we can conclude that preſcience is the ſign of this neceſſity: for if there be no neceſſity, preſcience cannot be the ſign of that which does not exiſt. To prove that nothing happens but by neceſſity, the arguments for this purpoſe muſt not be drawn from ſigns, or foreign cauſes; but from cauſes intimately connected with,

with, and belonging to this neceſſity.—But how is it poſſible, ſaid I, that thoſe things which are foreſeen ſhould not befal?—I do not ſay, replied ſhe, that we are to entertain any doubt but the events will take place, which Providence foreſees are to happen; but we are rather to believe, that although they do happen, yet that there is no neceſſity in the events themſelves, which conſtrains them to do ſo. The truth of which I ſhall thus endeavour to illuſtrate. We behold many things done under our view, ſuch as a coachman conducting his chariot and governing his horſes, and other things of a like nature. Now, do you ſuppoſe theſe things are done by the compulſion of a neceſſity?—No, anſwered I; for if every thing were moved by compulſion, the effects of art would be vain and fruitleſs.—If things then which are doing under our eye, added ſhe, are under no preſent neceſſity of happening; it muſt be admitted that theſe ſame things, before they befel, were under no neceſſity of taking place. It is plain, therefore, that ſome things befal, the event of which is altogether unconſtrained by neceſſity. For I do not think any perſon will ſay that ſuch things as are at preſent done, were not to happen before they were done. Why therefore may not things be foreſeen, and not neceſſitated in their events? As the knowledge then of what is preſent impoſes no neceſſity on things now done; ſo neither does the foreknowledge of what is to happen in future,

future, neceſſitate the things which are to take place. But you may ſay, you heſitate with regard to this point; whether there can be any certain foreknowledge of things, of which the event is not neceſſitated? For here there ſeems to be an evident contradiction. If things are foreſeen, you may contend they are under a neceſſity of happening; but if their event is not neceſſary, they cannot poſſibly be foreſeen, becauſe preſcience can foreſee nothing but what is abſolutely certain: and if things uncertain in their events are foreſeen as certain, this preſcience, you may maintain, is nothing more than a falſe opinion: for when we comprehend things differently from what they really are, we have but imperfect ideas of them, very remote from the truth of ſcience. To this I would anſwer, that the cauſe of this miſtake is, that men imagine that their knowledge is derived entirely from the nature of the things known; whereas it is quite the reverſe; ſince things are not known from properties inherent in the object of knowledge, but by faculties reſiding in the perceiver.—To give you an example of this in a few words: the globular form of a body ſtrikes the view in a different manner from what it does the touch: the eye, placed at a diſtance, darts its rays upon the object, and by beholding it, comprehends its form*.—On the

* Boethius here follows the opinion of the Stoicks, who imagined that viſion was performed by the eye darting its rays upon the objects.

contrary,

contrary, the object cannot be diſtinguiſhed by the touch, unleſs the hand is in contact with it, and feels it all around. Man likewiſe is ſurveyed in different ways; by the ſenſes, by the imagination, by reaſon, and by * intelligence.—The ſenſes only perceive his material figure;—the imagination perceives the external figure alone, excluſive of the matter;—reaſon goes further, and examining exiſtences in general, diſcovers the particular ſpecies of every individual;—the eye of intelligence ſtill riſes higher; for going beyond the bounds of what is general, it ſurveys the *ſimple forms* † themſelves, by its own pure and

* By intelligence, we are here to underſtand, as is plain from what follows, the intelligence of the Deity.

† By the ſimple forms, Boethius means the ſubſtantial or eſſential forms of the Peripateticks and the Schoolmen. Mr. Harris, in his very ingenious, elegant, and learned book, intitled, Philoſophical Arrangements, gives the beſt and cleareſt account of theſe abſtruſe matters that is any where to be met with. He ſays, "Extenſion, figure, "and organization, are the three original forms to body phyſical or "natural; figure having reſpect to its external, organization to its "internal, and extenſion being common both to one and the other. "It is more than probable, that from the variation in theſe univerſal, "and, as I may ſay, primary forms, ariſe moſt of thoſe ſecondary forms, "uſually called Qualities Senſible, becauſe they are the proper objects "of our ſeveral ſenſations. Such are roughneſs and ſmoothneſs, hard-"neſs and ſoftneſs, the diverſities of colours, ſavours, and odours, not "to mention thoſe powers of character more ſubtile, the powers elec-"tric, magnetic, medicinal, &c.

"Here, therefore, we may anſwer the queſtion, how natural bodies "are diſtinguiſhed. Not a ſingle one among them conſiſts of materials "inchaos, but of materials wrought up after the moſt exquiſite "manner,

and proper light: in which this is principally to be conſidered, that the higher power of perception includes the lower; but that the latter can by no means attain to the energy of the former: for the ſenſes cannot riſe to the per-

"manner, and that conſpicuous in their organiſation, or in their "figure, or in both.

"As, therefore, every natural body is diſtinguiſhed by the differ- "ences juſt deſcribed; and as theſe differences have nothing to do "with the original matter, which being every where ſimilar, can af- "ford no diſtinctions at all; may we not hence infer the expediency "of eſſential forms, that every natural ſubſtance may be eſſentially "characteriſed?" "Theſe eſſential forms," he adds afterwards, "mean "ſomething, which, though differing from matter, can yet never ſub- "ſiſt without it; ſomething, which united with it, helps to produce "every compoſite being; that is to ſay, in other words, every natural "ſubſtance in the viſible world." Philoſophical Arrangements, p. 88, 89, 90.

I am afraid the reader will derive ſmall information from this ſhort extract; I muſt therefore refer him to Mr. Harris's book, in which a great deal more is ſaid upon this ſubject. In the ſame book, p. 103. & ſeq. we have an account of the animating form of a natural body, which is too long to be extracted.

This doctrine of eſſential or ſubſtantial forms, ſo famous among the ſchoolmen, is ſo abſtruſe, that Boethius makes Philoſophy declare, immediately below, that ſimple forms are above the conception of reaſon, and can only be perceived by the intelligence of Deity.

The idea of the Platoniſts, with regard to this matter, according to Mr. Sydenham, in his argument to the greater Hippias, was, That by form, theſe philoſophers did not mean Nature's outward form, but ſome inward principle in nature, to which that outward form is owing; a principle, whoſe eternal ſameneſs is the cauſe of that conſtant ſimilarity in general found in the forms of nature, and the individuals of the ſame ſpecies, through every ſucceſſive generation; a ſimilarity as exact as if they were caſt in the ſame mould, or ſtamped with the ſame original types.

ception of any thing but matter, nor can the imagination comprehend exiſtences in general; neither can reaſon conceive ſimple forms: whereas intelligence, looking down as it were from above, and having conceived the form, diſcerns all the things which are below it, and comprehends, therefore, what does not fall within the reach of the other faculties. For ſhe comprehends exiſtences in general, as conceived by reaſon, the figure that ſtrikes the imagination, and the matter that falls under the cognizance of the ſenſes, without making uſe either of reaſon, or the imagination, or the ſenſes; but ſhe comprehends them all *formally*, *i. e.* by beholding their ſimple forms, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, by one ſingle effort of the mind. In the ſame way, reaſon, when ſhe conſiders a thing in general, apprehends both what is perceived by the imagination and the ſenſes, without the aſſiſtance of either. For inſtance, reaſon defines her general conception, thus, *Man is a rational creature with two feet*; which, though it be a general idea, yet every perſon knows that man, thus defined, is perceivable both by the imagination and the ſenſes; notwithſtanding that in this inſtance reaſon does not make uſe either of the imagination or the ſenſes, but employs her own proper faculty of perception. Thus the imagination, though at firſt ſhe learned by the ſenſes to diſtinguiſh and to form figures, acts afterwards by her own power,

power, and brings all ſenſible objects to her view without the aid of the ſenſes. Do you not ſee, then, that men attain to the knowledge of things, more by their own faculties, than by the inherent properties of the things themſelves? Nor is it unreaſonable that it ſhould be ſo; for as judgment is the act of the perſon judging, it is neceſſary that every perſon ſhould perform his own work, by his own proper faculties, and not by the aid of foreign power.

* Fallacious and obſcure the lore,
By Stoick ſages taught of yore:

From

* Prior, with admirable humour, deſcribes the manner that the ſoul perceives external objects, in the firſt canto of his Alma, or the Progreſs of the Mind.

Alma, *they* † ſtrenuouſly maintain,
Sits cock-horſe on her throne, the brain;
And from that ſeat of thought diſpenſes
Her ſov'reign pleaſure to the ſenſes.
Two optick nerves, they ſay, ſhe ties,
Like ſpectacles, acroſs the eyes;
By which the ſpirits bring her word
Whene'er the balls are fix'd and ſtirr'd;
How quick at park and play they ſtrike;
The duke they court, the toaſt they like;
And at St. James's turn their grace
From former friends, now out of place.
Wiſe Nature likewiſe, they ſuppoſe,
Has drawn two conduits down our noſe;

† i. e. The Cambridge wits.

From outward objects they ſuppoſe
A filmy ſubſtance ceaſeleſs flows,
Which ſtrikes acute upon the ſenſe,
And that all knowledge iſſues thence.
Hence, ſay they, Mind alone receives
Every image it perceives;

Could Alma elſe with judgment tell
When cabbage ſtinks, or roſes ſmell?
Or who would aſk for her opinion
Between an oyſter and an onion?
For from moſt bodies, Dick, you know,
Some little bits aſk leave to flow;
And as thro' theſe canals they roll,
Bring up a ſample of the whole;
Like footmen running before coaches,
To tell the inn what lord approaches.
By nerves about our palate plac'd,
She likewiſe judges of the taſte;
Elſe, diſmal thought! our warlike men
Might drink thick port for fine champagne;
And our ill-judging wives and daughters
Miſtake ſmall-beer for citron-waters.
Hence too, that ſhe might better hear,
She ſets a drum at either ear;
And loud or gentle, harſh or ſweet,
Are but th' alarums which they beat.
Laſt, to enjoy her ſenſe of feeling,
A thing ſhe much delights to deal in,
A thouſand little nerves ſhe ſends
Quite to our toes and fingers' ends;
And theſe, in gratitude again,
Return their ſpirits to the brain;
In which their figure being printed,
As juſt before, I think, I hinted,
Alma inform'd, can try the caſe,
As ſhe had been upon the place.

The

The paper, thus, a blank before,
They add, is trac'd with letters o'er.
If nothing to the mind is known
By powers inherent of her own,
But paſſive, ſhe th' impreſſions takes,
Which every outward object makes;
Reflecting like a mirror fair,
All bodies that preſented are;
Say, whence deriv'd her power to pierce
Thro' all th' extended Univerſe?
To roam the world material o'er,
And intellectual too explore;
Whence does ſhe arrange, compound,
And ſep'rate her ideal round?
Why does ſhe, by progreſſion flow,
From truth to truth aſcending go?
Why now to heav'n her way ſhe wings,
Now ſinks abſorb'd in grov'ling things?
Such powers, ſo various and ſo ſtrong,
Muſt to the heav'n-born mind belong:
They cannot, ſure, exiſtence owe
To traces which from matter flow.
But ſtill, 'twixt matter and the mind
We plainly a connection find:
Thus—light when flaſhing in the eye,
Thus—thro' the ear when noiſes fly,
Mind inſtantaneous running o'er,
Of native ideas, her ſtore,
Th' according images unites,
And blends with thoſe which ſenſe excites.

For each external form, we find,
Its counterpart has in the mind.

Although there are in objects certain qualities which ſtrike externally upon the ſenſes, and put their inſtruments in motion; although the paſſive impreſſion upon the body precedes the action of the mind; although, in fine, the former rouſes the latter to action, and awakens the forms which reſt within; yet if the perception of objects flows not from an impreſſion made upon the mind; but if the mind is capable, however, by its powers, of diſtinguiſhing this impreſſion acting upon the ſurface of the body; with how much more reaſon may we affirm, that beings, purely ſpiritual, diſcern things by their own light, by an act of their underſtanding alone, without being under any neceſſity of having recourſe to impreſſions made upon them by external objects. For this reaſon alſo it is, that nature has varied the powers of knowledge which ſhe has diſtributed to created beings. Thus, animals that have no motion, as fiſhes that are nouriſhed in their ſhells and adhere to rocks, are endowed with ſenſation only, and have no other knowledge; whilſt imagination is given to ſuch brutes as are capable of motion, and ſeem naturally to deſire ſome things, and avoid others: but Reaſon is the attribute of man alone, as Intelligence is that of God. Hence it is, that God's knowledge exceeds that

of

of all other beings; as it not only comprehends what belongs to his own nature, but whatever is perceived by beings inferior to him. What would you think, if the Senſes and the Imagination ſhould oppoſe Reaſon, and endeavour to perſuade her that the general ideas of things, which ſhe believes ſhe comprehends, are nothing? for what falls under the cognizance of the ſenſes and imagination, cannot be general. Perhaps you would ſay, either Reaſon judges true, that nothing is apprehended by ſenſe; or, ſince ſhe knows many things are perceived by the ſenſe and by the imagination, ſhe muſt judge falſely, when ſhe conſiders as general that which is ſenſible and particular. But if Reaſon ſhould anſwer to this, that in her idea of what is general, ſhe comprehends clearly whatever is ſenſible and imaginable; but as to the ſenſes and imagination, they cannot poſſibly attain to the knowledge of what is general, ſince their perception cannot reach beyond the material figures that ſtrike them; and therefore, in all matters of ſcience, the greateſt credit is due to the judgment of that guide, whoſe powers are the moſt diſcerning and perfect. In a controverſy of this kind, ought not we, who are poſſeſſed of the powers of reaſon, imagination, and ſenſe, to enliſt ourſelves on the ſide of Reaſon, and to eſpouſe her cauſe. The caſe is entirely ſimilar, when human reaſon thinks the divine underſtanding can-

not behold future events, in any other way than ſhe herſelf is capable of perceiving them: for your reaſoning with regard to this matter is preciſely this; "That things certainly cannot be "foreſeen, unleſs their events are neceſſitated; "therefore there can be no ſuch thing as pre-"ſcience; for if there were, every thing would "be fixed by an abſolute neceſſity." In anſwer to this I would ſay, If it were poſſible for us, who are endowed only with reaſon, to become poſſeſſed of the Divine Intelligence, we ſhould then diſcover, becauſe it is proper, that both ſenſe and imagination ſhould ſubmit to reaſon; ſo it is likewiſe moſt fit and becoming, that human reaſon ſhould ſubmit to an all-knowing Mind. Let us therefore ſtrive to elevate ourſelves to the exalted height of the Supreme Intelligence; there ſhall Reaſon behold what ſhe cannot diſcover in herſelf: ſhe will there ſee how things, which in themſelves have no certain event, are, however, certainly foreſeen by a clear and infallible preſcience; and ſhe will perceive that this is no conjecture or vague opinion, but a ſimple, ſupreme, and unlimited knowledge.

Of varied creatures, mark th' unnumber'd ſtore
Wand'ring at will the wide creation o'er:
Some drag along their lengths in ſpeckled pride,
And trace the duſt in furrows as they glide;

Some

Some ſoaring mount the winds with daring wing,
And thro' the fields of air exulting ſing;
Whilſt others o'er the fruitful valley rove,
Or ſeek the ſhadows of the ſounding grove.
Tho' varied brutal forms are endleſs found,
Their looks dejected ever love the ground;
This grov'ling poſture ſtupefies the ſenſe,
And all their low propenſions iſſue thence.
Imperial man alone rears high his head,
And ſpurns the ſordid earth with ſtately tread:
Admoniſh'd hence, if not by glaring toys
Seduc'd, and ſunk in Senſe's baneful joys;
Taught by his form erect, and lifted eye,
Let man's aſpiring thoughts ſtill range on high;
Thus—'twixt his aſpect, and his tow'ring mind,
We, pleas'd, a ſtrict conformity ſhall find.

Since then every thing which is known is not, as I have before proved, perceived by its own inherent properties, but by virtue of powers reſiding in the perſon comprehending it; let us now examine, as far as it is poſſible for us, the diſpoſition of the Divine Nature, that we may thence derive a clearer conception of the knowledge of God.

It is the ſentiment of all reaſonable creatures, that God is eternal. Let us then conſider what eternity is; becauſe this will diſcover to us, at the ſame time, the nature of God, and of his knowledge.

Eternity then is a full and perfect poſſeſſion of the whole of everlaſting life, altogether and at once. Now this will evidently appear, by comparing it with things which endure only for a time: for every temporal exiſtence glides on through the paſt to the preſent, and thence to the future; ſo that there is nothing under the laws of time, which can at once comprehend the whole extent of its duration. As it has loſt yeſterday, it does not as yet enjoy to-morrow; and as for to-day, it is plain you have no more of life than the preſent tranſitory moment. Whatever therefore be ſubjected to the flight of time, as Ariſtotle thought of the world, it may be without beginning and without end; and altho' its duration may extend to an infinity of time, it is not of ſuch a nature as to be properly deemed eternal; becauſe it does not comprehend at once the whole extent of its infinite duration, having no knowledge of things future, which are not yet arrived. Whatever comprehends and poſſeſſes at the ſame time, the fulneſs of an unlimited life; which catches hold of the future, and from which nothing that is paſt is eſcaped; that, and that alone, is truly eternal: for what is eternal muſt be in nothing defective; muſt enjoy itſelf; and muſt have the infinite ſucceſſion of time clearly and perfectly under its perception. With regard to this point, ſome Philoſophers, who

who had heard it was the ſentiment of Plato, that this world never had a beginning, and ſhould never have an end *, from hence falſely concluded, that the created univerſe was co-eternal with its Creator. But it is one thing to be conducted through a life of infinite duration, which was Plato's opinion of the world; and another thing to comprehend at once the whole extent of this duration as preſent, which is manifeſt can only belong to the mind of the Deity. In fact, it is not ſo much by the meaſure of time, that God appears to us prior to and more ancient than his creatures, as by the properties of his nature, which are altogether ſimple and undivided: for the infinite progreſſion of temporal things aims at a reſemblance of that ever-preſent condition of an immoveable life, [the property of God only], which, as it is not capable either of copying or equalling, from immobility it degenerates into motion;

* The Philoſophers here alluded to, are Crantor, Taurus of Berytus, Plotinus, Jamblichus, and other Platoniſts, who, in maintaining that the world is eternal, ſupport their opinion upon the authority of Plato; although that philoſopher ſays clearly, in his Timæus, that the world had a beginning; and adds afterwards, in the ſame book, "ſince the univerſe was framed by divine ſymmetry, it cannot be deſtroyed but by the ſame Almighty Power who formed it, and united together ſo firmly all its parts."

What might perhaps lead theſe philoſophers into this miſtake, is, that Plato ſometimes calls matter eternal; by which he does not mean that matter viſibly ſubſiſted from all eternity, but that it ſubſiſted intelligibly in the internal idea of God: and in this reſpect he mentions the world as eternal.

and,

and, inſtead of becoming an immoveable ſtate, and ſimply preſent, it falls into an infinite meaſure of paſt and future time. But ſince it cannot poſſeſs at once the whole extent of its duration; yet as it never ceaſes in ſome meaſure to exiſt, it ſtrives therefore in vain to emulate *that*, whoſe perfection it can neither attain or expreſs, by attaching itſelf to the preſence of the fleeting moment, which paſſes away with rapidity: and becauſe this fleeting preſence bears a reſemblance to the immoveable preſence juſt now mentioned, it communicates, to the things which partake of it, an appearance of exiſtence *: but as it cannot ſtop or abide, it purſues its courſe through unlimited time; and hence it is, that by gliding along it continues its duration, the extent and plenitude of which it could not comprehend by reſting in a permanent ſtate. If therefore we would give to things their true names, we muſt ſay with Plato, that God is eternal, and the world perpetual. Since then every being judges of the things that are the objects of its underſtanding, according to the faculties of judgment which it poſſeſſes; and as God is in a ſtate im-

* "It communicates to the things which partake of it an *appearance of exiſtence*."—This ought to be conſidered in no other point of view than as one of the high flights of the Platonick philoſophy: for many of the Platoniſts were of opinion, that nothing can be ſaid with propriety to exiſt, but Deity; as he alone is ſelf-exiſtent, and the cauſe of exiſtence.

moveable,

moveable, and eternally preſent to every thing, his knowledge ſoars above the progreſſion of time, brings together the paſt and the future, though at infinite intervals, and comprehends, in his capacious intellect, all things, as if they were now tranſacting. If therefore you would properly define this preſcience which gives to God the cogniſance of every thing, it muſt not be conſidered as an anticipated knowledge of the future, but it ought more juſtly to be eſteemed a knowledge of the *never-failing now* *. Hence, the word preſcience, or foreknowledge, is not ſo applicable to the Divine Intelligence, as the word providence, or ſuperintendence; for the exalted and ſovereign Ruler looks down as it were from the ſummit of his univerſe, and beholds every thing moving in obedience to his infinitely wiſe direction.

But can you imagine that God impoſes a neceſſity upon events by beholding them, when men, by ſeeing things, do not make them neceſſary? for you before acknowledged to me, that your viewing an action happening under your eye, lays no neceſſity upon it. If we then may be allowed to compare the knowledge of man with that of God, it is plain, that whilſt you ſee only ſome things in a limited inſtant, God ſees every thing preſent to him at once, in an unlimited eternity. His Divine foreſight does not

* In which Deity beholds every thing as if it were immoveably preſent.

therefore

therefore change the nature and properties of things; but they are preſent to his view in the very order as they ſhall in time befal: nor does he judge confuſedly of them, but diſtinguiſhes with preciſion the events which will neceſſarily happen, from thoſe which will take place unconſtrained by neceſſity. When you ſee, for example, a man walking on the earth, and the ſun riſing in the ſkies; although you ſee both of them at once, yet you plainly perceive that the action of the former is voluntary, whilſt the motion of the latter is neceſſary. Thus the eye of Providence contemplates all things, without altering their nature and properties; for every thing in fact is preſent to him; though, with regard to its temporal event, it may be ſtill future. Hence it follows, that when God knows a thing will be, although at the ſame time he perceives it is under no neceſſity of being, we muſt nevertheleſs allow, that this knowledge is not an uncertain conjecture, but a knowledge founded upon truth.

If you ſtill inſiſt, *that what God foreſees will befal, muſt befal; and that things which cannot do otherwiſe than happen, muſt neceſſarily happen* (if in this way you force me to admit a neceſſity, it muſt be acknowledged, it is unqueſtionably true that things are under ſuch a conſtraint; but this is at the ſame time a truth which can ſcarce be comprehended by any man, unleſs he is acquainted with the Divine counſels). But, in anſwer

anſwer to the above objection, that what God foreknows will take place, muſt come to paſs; I would have you to conſider, that every thing which happens, as it bears a relation to the Divine knowledge, is neceſſary; but when conſidered in its own nature, it is altogether free and unconſtrained: for there are two kinds of neceſſity; the one ſimple and abſolute, as, men muſt neceſſarily die; the other conditional, as, if you know that a man walks, he muſt certainly do ſo: for that which is known cannot be otherwiſe than it is apprehended to be. But this circumſtance or condition does by no means infer the other abſolute neceſſity: for the nature of the thing itſelf does not here conſtitute the neceſſity, but the neceſſity ariſes from the conjunction of the condition. Thus, no neceſſity compels a man to walk, who voluntarily ſteps forward; yet when he ſteps forward, he muſt of neceſſity walk: ſo every thing which is preſent to the eye of Providence muſt aſſuredly be, although there be nothing in its own nature to conſtitute this neceſſity. Since Deity then beholds all future events, proceeding from the freedom of the will, as actually preſent; theſe events by that condition become neceſſary, in relation to the Divine apprehenſion; although, when conſidered in their own nature, they be at abſolute liberty. All things therefore which God by his preſcience knows will happen, ſhall undoubtedly come to paſs; but as many of theſe events proceed from free-will, which,

although

although they do befal, yet their exiſtence changes not their nature, as, before they happened, they had it in their power not to happen.—But it is a matter of no moment, whether things in their own nature are neceſſary or not, ſince, by this circumſtance of the Divine knowledge, to which they are all ſubject, they fall out in every reſpect as if they were conſtrained by neceſſity.—This, replied ſhe, is explained, in the inſtance I gave you of the ſun riſing, and a man walking. Now as you ſee both of theſe occurrences happen under your view, they aſſuredly do happen; but nevertheleſs there is this difference, that the event of the former was neceſſary before it befel, whereas that of the latter was altogether free. Thus, all things which are preſent to the view of the Deity unqueſtionably exiſt; but ſome of them proceed from a neceſſity belonging to their own natures, as in the inſtance of the riſing ſun; while others flow from the will and power of the agent, as in the other example. It is then with reaſon we have aſſerted, that in reſpect of the Divine apprehenſion, things are neceſſary; but that they are abſolutely free from the chains of Fate, when conſidered in themſelves. In the ſame way, every thing which is an object of ſenſe, is general in regard to its relation with reaſon, but particular when conſidered by itſelf.

But you may ſay, If it be in my power to change my purpoſe, I can deceive Providence, ſince I may not carry into execution thoſe things which

ſhe foreſaw I would do. To this I anſwer, It is indeed in your power to deviate from your purpoſe; but as Providence ſees really and actually what you can do; ſince ſhe knows whether you will alter your reſolutions or not, and upon what reſolution you will fix; it is as impoſſible for you to deceive the preſcience of God, as it would be to eſcape the notice of a preſent and ſteady obſerver of your actions; though, from the freedom of your will, you have it in your power to vary and diverſify them ever ſo much. What!—ſhall the Divine knowledge, will you farther ſay, be changed according to my diſpoſitions; and when my deſires vary and fluctuate, fixing now upon this thing, now upon that, will the apprehenſion of the Deity vary with them? No, certainly, it will not. For the view of Deity, if I may ſpeak, out-runs every future event, and brings it back into the preſence of his own apprehenſion; which does not vary, as you imagine, to conform itſelf to your capriees, but remains immoveable, and anticipates and comprehends at once all your variety of changes: which faculty of comprehending and ſeeing all things as preſent, God doth not derive from the iſſue of future events, but from the ſimplicity of his own nature. Here then is a ſolution of what you objected to me formerly *, that it is a prepoſterous thing to ſay, that our temporal events are the

* See p. 197.—If it is admitted, that things in future are foreſeen by God, becauſe they are to happen; this makes preſcience depend upon the iſſue of our temporal events.

cauſes

cauſes of the Divine preſcience: for the quality of the Sovereign Mind is ſuch, that every thing is ſubordinate to the eternal preſence of his knowledge; that he plans and directs all events, without being in the leaſt dependent upon futurity.

Upon the whole then it muſt be concluded, the freedom of the human will remains unconſtrained and inviolable; and that thoſe laws cannot be conſidered as unjuſt, which aſſign rewards and puniſhments to men, whoſe actions are in no reſpect under the compulſion of neceſſity. We ought therefore to comfort ourſelves with this reflection, that God, who ſits on high, perceives every thing, knows perfectly what is to happen; and that the eternal preſence of his knowledge, concurring with the future quality of our actions, engages him always to diſpenſe rewards to the good, and puniſhments to the wicked. The confidence which, for this reaſon, we repoſe in God, cannot be vain or fruitleſs; neither will the prayers we addreſs to him be inefficacious, when they proceed from a heart which is pure and upright. Deteſt, then, and flee every vice; cultivate and purſue every virtue; exalt your mind to God, the only true hope; and offer up your prayers with humility to his throne. If you are ingenuous, you muſt confeſs the ſtrict obligation that you are under, to live agreeably to the rules of wiſdom and probity, as you know that all your actions are performed under the eye of an all-diſcerning Judge.

FINIS. 1p Cat.